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LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam: ***"After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, the Holy One created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith.' Lilith said: "We are equal because we both come from the earth . . .'"*** **(From *The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b*)**

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FROM THE EDITOR

With "Jewish identity" on every agenda in the wake of recent intermarriage statistics, let's look at those "first moments" where a girl is touched by experiences identifiably Jewish. Considering how pulpit preaching emphasizes the importance of "the home" and "the family" in inculcating and reinforcing Jewish identity, we need to begin giving equal time to institutions. I have subversive purposes here. First, to point out that parents may have as great an impact on daughters in selecting for them Jewish schools and youth groups, where girls and young women interact with their peers, as by what's going on at home. Second, to praise the often unacknowledged women who touch the lives of girls and young women at three distinct stages in their identity formation.

The Marines of Jewish life. A personal recollection: despite very positive Jewish experiences at home, my earliest Jewish bonds were, it seems to me, forged not in my family's kitchen but in a kindergarten, even though I grew up in a family where Shabbat candles were lit each week, where Yiddish was spoken with loving grandparents, where my zayde carried a *luach* (Jewish calendar) in his vest pocket, and my bubbe cooked Eastern European Jewish foods, and my paternal great-grandparents are buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. My first sense impressions of "Jewish" derive from Friday afternoons in the kindergarten of my Jewish day school in Winnipeg. Every time since then that I've sipped purple grape juice (now from my daughter's cup on Friday nights) I am back there, setting the tiny table for Shabbat, finding out who will get to be *eema* and *abba* that week.

So I recognized a homely truth when I heard my colleague Naomi Danis quote early childhood specialist Floreva Cohen: "Nursery school teachers are the Marines of Jewish life," the shock troops who often represent the very first contact parents have with a Jewish institution as adults. The nursery school staffers are the ones who have to see the parents through their own Jewish ambivalence ("What do you mean the school is going to be closed because it's Succot?" "How can I explain to my daughter that even though Daddy's new wife has a Christmas tree we won't have one in our house?" And so on.) These educators, almost invariably underappreciated, underpaid, and female, often represent "the" Jewish community to parents, guiding them and their children through divorce, death and mourning, holiday celebrations with relatives of different backgrounds, plus all the usual socialization and learning skills. The Marines imagery feels just right.

Women cantors as role models. In the wake (so to speak) of the Marines image came a letter from Cantor Amy Miller reminding me that women cantors, the ones who train Bat and Bar Mitzvah celebrants and spend many hours one-on-one with them, have a unique opportunity to influence girls in that liminal state between childhood and the teen-agerhood. They are the Jewish adults who, like the nursery-school Marines, tutor, sing, cajole, reassure, praise, instill self-confidence, and represent women's strengths and talents. Their influence can be a useful counterweight to some of the more egregious Bat and Bar Mitzvah influences. As one cantor told me: "Bar Mitzvah is the boy's first opportunity to appear in public in a three-piece suit. A girl's Bat Mitzvah has become an opportunity to debut in a *bustier*, showing off not her learning but her sexuality." A woman cantor, downplaying sartorial inappropriateness, can suggest, among other things, that B'not Mitzvah return to the custom of wearing robes, and that they consult LILITH's ongoing listing of worthy tzedakah projects (in the Tsena-Rena pages and elsewhere) to which their guests can contribute in the name of the celebrant.

Jewish women on campus, a population at risk. More so than their male peers, they express uneasy feelings about identifying as Jews, perhaps as a result of the powerful negative images set forth in the angry JAP-baiting which persists in college communities. Whatever the reason, Jewish women are less likely to be outspoken in their defense of Jewish causes, less assertive even in admitting that they're from a suburb associated with being significantly "Jewish." All the noise about the rising incidence of intermarriage has so far failed to address the problem that no matter who the spouses of these women will be, the women themselves need to have their Jewish identity buttressed. What helps? The presence of women rabbis on campus. Students can see a female Jew, overt about her Jewishness, speak out authoritatively on women's issues, on Jewish topics, on campus controversies, and command respectful attention. Women in college have many models for successful womanhood but fewer models for integrating feminism and Judaism.

Susan Weidman Schneider

Coming up in the next issue of LILITH is a major installment in our continuing analysis of Jewish women's philanthropy.

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Singin' them Yiddishe Blues

For Ann Rabson, only the throaty rollicking of the blues can convey the pain and satisfaction of being an American woman. Rabson, 46, a pianist, is one-third of what is certainly the world's most successful women's Blues band: Saffire — The Uppity Blues Women. The diverse trio brings together "part-Cherokee, all-Okie" Earlene Lewis, African-American Gaye Adegbalola, and Rabson, who comes from a New York Jewish family transplanted to small-town Ohio.

The band's diversity, Rabson says, has been a source of fascination for audiences and the media. "There certainly are cultural differences among the people in my band, and I suspect that some of my cultural orientation comes from being Jewish. We have to be on our toes not to offend each other."

Her non-observant family left little religious impact on Rabson, but, she says, "there was always a feeling of being different." This sense of being outside mainstream white American culture contributed to her leanings toward the Blues, long the province of the marginalized. Although Saffire touches upon some of the traditional my-man-left-me-and-it-hurts-like-hell Blues themes, the group also celebrates both womanhood and aging, as illustrated in the song "Middle-Aged Blues." Their latest album is "Hot Flash," and the group is currently working on a third. Rabson refuses to sing what she terms "masochistic, Bessie Smith" songs. "I can only bring myself to sing songs that relate to me," she says.

But the selection of traditional Blues songs which remain true to a feminist sensibility is large, stemming from "a tremendous history of strong women in the Blues." As a result, the group's listeners include "more women, more gay people, and more affluent people in addition to the traditional Blues audience," Rabson says. It's a diversity that the group courts. "We're a whole lot more likely to go back to a place where they're all different hues and different shapes and sizes."

None of the women started out in the performing life. In 1984, Rabson was a computer programmer in Fredericksburg, Virginia, raising her teenage daughter alone (she is now remarried), when she and Adegbalola, a guitarist, began playing together. Earlene Lewis, a computer student of Rabson's, was taking a make-up quiz at Rabson's house while the two rehearsed, and was soon abducted into the midlife sowing of wild oats.

Rabson's first year was overbooked; she worked full-time and played five nights a week. "For a single parent, going to the bar is a problem," she says, "but I had a lot of help from the community."

Today, the group spends a good deal of time on the road, driving cross-country and occasionally splitting up for regroupings with other Blues players.

"I personally feel much more comfortable in this life," says Rabson, who loves "the excitement of never knowing where you're going to be the next day."

Rabson's fingers dance across the piano keys and the women's voices come forth. Their words proclaim not only their own independence, but the universal strength of women.

I'm not the kind of woman you can leave behind
I can get you out of my life;
You'll never get me out of your mind
. . . I'll be rid of you 'til the day I die;
You'll be haunted for the rest of your life.

— Lisa Bornstein

Norm Shafer

Saffire — The Uppity Blues Women. (From left to right) Gaye Adegbalola, Ann Rabson, and Earlene Lewis.

Canada's Parliament Fixes Jewish Divorces

What began as one woman's passionate crusade for *get* reform grew into a powerful coalition of Canadian-Jewish organizations, then into a national lobbying campaign to the Canadian Parliament, finally culminating in the enactment in August 1990 of the only national law anywhere in the world reducing obstacles to Jewish divorce.

In Jewish divorce, a *get* document must be issued by a man and accepted by a woman in order for the woman to remarry in her own faith. Without a *get*, should a woman remarry, her children will be considered *mamzerim*, bastards, according to *halakha* [Jewish law] able only to marry other *mamzerim* or converts to Judaism. Because a woman cannot issue a *get* herself, men have frequently abused the system, blackmailing their ex-wives, refusing them their liberty out of spite, or attaching conditions in the civil divorce to the granting of the *get*.

While a *halakhic* response to the problem must come eventually, Canada's secular approach appears to be successful. The new amendment to the Canadian divorce law stipulates that initiators of civil divorce suits must ensure that all potential obstacles to a partner's religious remarriage are removed. It sets procedures in place to assure this and grants judges the power to use sanctions against a recalcitrant partner.

Passage of the amendment came about, according to Norma Baumel Joseph of Montreal,

Rabbi Leah Novick

Bringing "Grandmother Energy" to Bay Area Jews

Although one might think that an outspoken, funky woman rabbi might be marginalized within the mainstream Jewish community, San Francisco-based Rabbi Leah Novick moves among its various elements with ease. With a past including teaching "Women in Politics" at UC Berkeley, working as Director of the Berkeley Jewish Community Center, leading a women's spirituality group, freelancing as a rabbi in rural communities, founding the national disarmament group SANE, and serving as vice president of the National Women's Political Caucus, Rabbi Novick is able to foster, on a grass roots level, the exchange of ideas among the disparate elements of the San Francisco Jewish community. In addition, Novick's involvement with goddess-oriented spirituality allows her to act as a bridge between the mainstream Jewish community and Jews who have turned to other traditions.

Much of Rabbi Novick's recent work has been with Jews in rural communities whom she describes as "experiencing spiritual awakenings but lacking Jewish resources and connections to the Jewish establishment." She has found that many of these Jews are alienated from Judaism but are hungry for spirituality in their lives. Novick offers workshops on Torah as "the Tree of Life," celebrations for the New Moon, and rituals which connect Judaism with the environment. Her earth-centered approach is welcomed by rural Jews who live in close connection to the land and are aware of ecological changes in their daily lives, from water crises to air pollution. Rabbi Novick says that she is able, in a Jewish context, "to provide the spirit people are longing for," and thereby help rural Jews create the foundation for a grassroots Jewish renewal movement.

In her interactions with more traditional and conservative elements of the Jewish community, Novick tells of bringing "grandmother energy" to her work as a woman rabbi. She is often surprised at how conservative groups are drawn to what she calls "the female style," even if they do not accept her practice of making gender-neutral changes in the liturgy. Novick points out that more traditional Jews are aware of and often open to learning about the work she is doing, just as she is familiar with their work. In the San Francisco area, where the Jewish community is less segmented and stratified than other urban centers, Rabbi Leah Novick is able to serve as a mediator, educator, spiritual leader, and example of grassroots organizing for Jewish women across the country. "I can call the local Chabad rabbi and ask him for a favor," boasts Novick. "And he can do the same with me."

— Hadar Dubowsky

through "an incredible consensus process among different groups of women." A key player in the passage of Bill C-61 amending the Canadian Divorce Act was the Coalition of Jewish Women for the *Get*, chaired by Evelyn Brook of B'nai Brith Women of Canada (BBW).

The Coalition was formed in 1986, shortly after Joseph addressed the executive of BBW in Montreal about the plight of *agunot*. (An *agunah* is a woman anchored to an absent husband. She is unable to marry according to *halakha* because she has no *get*.)

Joseph, a feminist Orthodox Jew, scholar, teacher, social activist, Rabbi's wife, and mother of four, has been sensitizing the Montreal and Toronto com-munities about Jewish divorce since the 1970's. A fiery and compelling speaker with a seemingly inexhaustible well of compassion for the thousands of women caught in the trap of *get* abuse—hundreds of whom she has counselled personally—she is often taken for an *agunah* herself.

But she is not. For Joseph, the issue of Jewish religious divorce cuts to the heart of the integrity of the Jewish people. "For me it was the meeting ground of my interest in women's issues and my belief in Judaism. . . If Judaism is a just system, if it comes from God — it has to be able to fix this."

Credit for bringing together the Coalition of Jewish Women for the *Get* goes to Evelyn Brook, past Public Affairs Chair of BBW and present Chair of its Social Violence Committee (both voluntary positions). Brook (a full-time administrator in a textile company) added advocacy to the original educational campaign spearheaded by Joseph.

Five national women's organizations participated in the coalition in addition to BBW: Canadian Jewish Congress's Status of Women Committee, Emunah, Na'mat, Hadassah-WIZO, and the Montreal Chapter of ORT.

National organizations gave their mandates to local Montreal chapters to act on their behalf, thereby extending their political clout to local organizations, yet allowing for streamlined decision-making. The key to their success, according to Brook, was meticulous research and follow up, tight scheduling, and a formidable letter-writing campaign to targeted Members of Parliament (those with large Jewish constituencies or those known to be interested in social reform) and the Canadian Justice Department.

"We just wrote letters all the time," says Brook. No woman ever left a conference of any constituent coalition without writing her own letter about *get* reform in support of the stand taken by the organization. (Organizers always brought pens and paper and supplied four different styles of sample letters for women who didn't feel able to compose their own.)

At a House of Commons Committee hearing where Joseph gave a spellbinding presentation in March 1990, the Coalition was given a hero's welcome. Joseph, Brook, and the ten other Coalition members who had travelled to Ottawa to make the brief were astonished when members of Parliament sought them out to commend them on the efficacy of their lobby. The Committee unanimously passed the proposed amendment, and five months later the bill became law.

Whereas the specifics of the bill's passage were particular to the Canadian Parliamentary system, the Coalition's methods are specific to neither Canada nor divorce. Brook is, for instance, currently using the same approach to bring about changes in the administration of domestic violence laws.

"It was a women's issue and could be best resolved by women," says Brook. "No one understands it from the inside as we women do. . . people told us we'd never get a federal law passed about Jewish divorce. It took nearly five years, but we did it."

— Elaine Kalman Naves

Sexism in the Jewish Media?

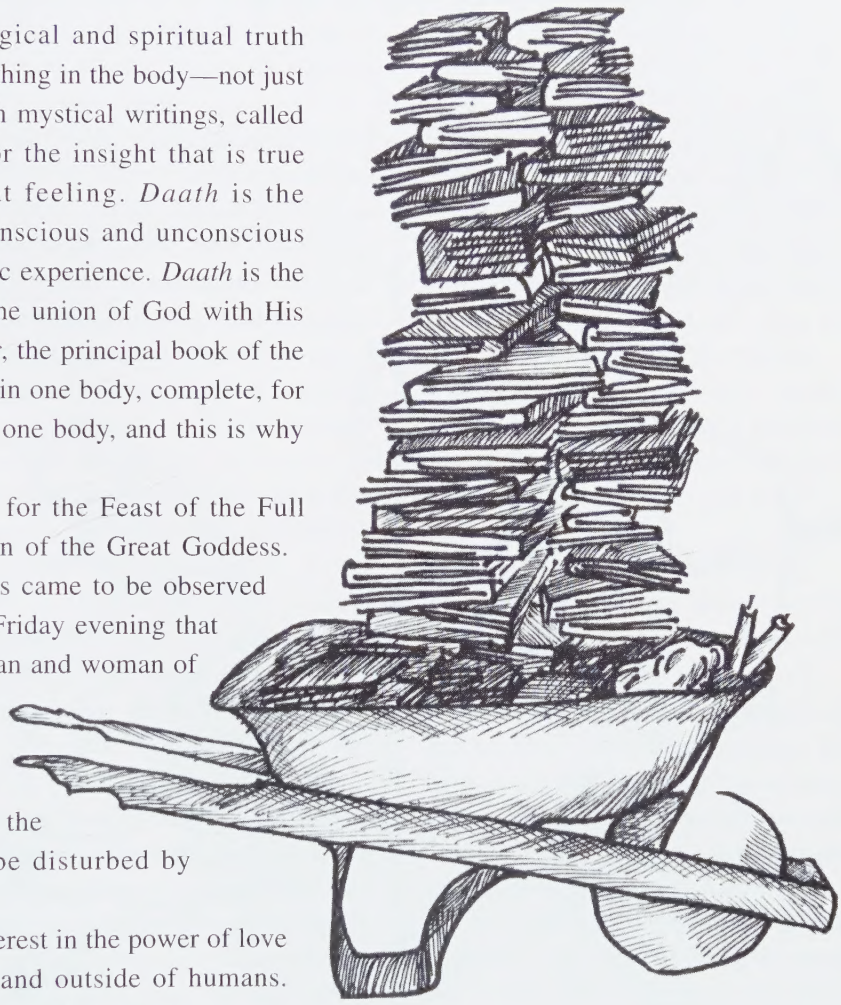
It's hard to fill a good woman's shoes. That's the lesson the American Jewish Press Association learned when Shoshana Cardin, Chair of the Council of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, cancelled her appearance as a keynote speak-

(continued on page 28)

SHEKHINA: The Door to the Soul

People who are uncovering psychological and spiritual truth experience the power of knowing something in the body—not just in the head or even in the heart. Jewish mystical writings, called the Kabbalah, use the word *daath* for the insight that is true because it is accompanied by great feeling. *Daath* is the knowledge that comes from the union of conscious and unconscious minds, a kind of knowing that is a deeply erotic experience. *Daath* is the word used by Kabbalistic writers to refer to the union of God with His Bride, the Sabbath, or the Shekhina. The Zohar, the principal book of the Kabbalah, says, "[On the Sabbath] all is found in one body, complete, for the Matronit clings to the King and is become one body, and this is why blessings are found on that day."

Shekhina, meaning Sabbath, is the name for the Feast of the Full Moon, which once celebrated the menstruation of the Great Goddess. Originally honored once a month, Her holiness came to be observed once every quarter moon (once a week). The Friday evening that began Her honor was the night in which the man and woman of the home made love, recapitulating the union of the God and Goddess. The following day, Saturday, was devoted to the postcoital reverie of washed perceptions and the leisurely depth of feeling that should not be disturbed by mundane doings or materialism.



So the young woman piled the thousand and one books, some dry bread, and some candles on a cart.

Patriarchal influence, however, lessened interest in the power of love between the male and female deities within and outside of humans. Consequently, the Sabbath became more an observance obsessed with the minutiae of the law, and the Shekhina, once Goddess of Babylon and then of the Jews, went underground.

Her light still glows, however, in the holiness of passionate love, and the braids of Her hair are suggested in the shape of *challah* bread. Study of the Torah, said to be Her outer garments, can be symbolized in erotic imagery: like a Bride within Her curtained chamber, the Shekhina must be courted with the heart, soul, and entire being of those who would know Her wisdom and joy.

Silver candlesticks, white candles, and *challah* bread all help me to call the Shekhina. I wrote this story from the point of view of the young ascetic in me who is still waking to the peace of her own body.

a story by Carolyn McVickar Edwards

Shekhina, meaning Sabbath, is the name for the Feast of the Full Moon, which once celebrated the menstruation of the Great Goddess.

Once a young woman asked herself these questions: Who am I? And how am I connected to all others? She wondered and wandered and asked the quesitons again and again. She yearned for the answers.

One day she approached a teacher and asked, "Who am I? And how am I connected to all others?" The teacher said, "Study will answer those riddles."

"What must I study?" asked the young woman.

"Study the thousand and one books," said the teacher. "It is through your study that you will gain wisdom."

So the young woman piled the thousand and one books, some dry bread, and some candles on a cart. Then she took herself in cap and shawl, with paper in her shoes for warmth, to a small house at the edge of a town.

Inside the house, at the desk she sat, day after day, reading the thousand and one books. "Who am I?" she wrote on a paper. "How am I connected to all others?" she wrote on a second. Outside the trees turned fiery and lost their leaves. Inside, the young woman filled page after page with learning from her books. She stopped only to swallow a little of the dry bread and sometimes to renew her candle or to drop her aching shoulders before her on the desk to sleep. The young woman's wrists grew thin and her eyes burned. The thousand and one books stacked themselves around her in wobbly towers, and the pages of her writings heaped themselves before her like a fence.

One night a freezing rain beat in a torrent against the walls of the house. The young woman pulled her shawl tight around her, but she felt the damp like a knife in her back. Her feet were numb. The marks on the page before her began to swim. Suddenly the young woman let out a moan and flung the book toward the window. "I don't know!" she yelled. "I DON'T KNOW!"

At that very second the rain outside halted and a howl of wind blew up. It clattered the panes and then, in a rush of power, ripped open the catch of the window. The room was filled with the shock of cold air. The candle blew out, and the papers on the desk flew apart, lifting like the feathers of a giant white bird.

The young woman staggered to the window and wrenched it shut. Then, turning slowly and looking across the room, she drew back to see that a small light had formed on the other side of the swinging doors that led to the next room. "How can that be?" said the young woman. "There is no one in this house but me."

The young woman felt afraid. But the light glowed so softly. After a moment, the young woman followed the glow to the other side of the doors. The pale light went on before her. This time she had to part a curtain to enter the next room. Still the glow went forward, and the young woman found herself walking through room after room. She had not known the house had so many rooms. Was it possible she'd forgotten them? Had they been here before?

Finally the light drew her to a tightly closed door. She pushed it open, and the light settled on a bed in the small room. The young woman breathed out as she saw the light falter, then flare up, and then turn before her eyes into a beautiful Woman.

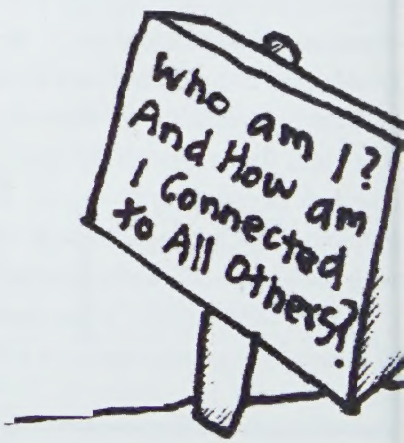
The Woman's skin was dark and Her hair curled about Her face. Her garment was like the shadows of leaves. She looked quietly at the young woman. The bed on which She sat was covered with quilts the color of shells. The walls seemed soft as clouds.

"Who are you?" asked the young woman.

"I am your Soul," said the Woman. "I am Shekhina."

The Woman turned and lifted to the bed a great tray laden with a feast. "Eat and be full." Fruit of every sort filled the tray. The young woman fell into it and ate her fill.

The Shekhina handed her a cup of steaming broth. The young woman felt the



warmth seep into her bones. "Bathe now," said the Shekhina.

Around her the young woman could feel hot, lapping, washing water. Afterward a towel folded around her held in the sweet heat.

"Now. Come. Sleep," said the Shekhina. She helped the young woman into the bed.

For six days the young woman clung to the Shekhina, wrapped now in the deepest sleep, then awake and gazing into Her eyes, and then holding Her completely as she could. And then again drifting into the lovely snow of sleep.

On the seventh day, the Shekhina rose up and kissed the young woman on her lips. Then Her skin seemed to melt and she could no longer see Her features. She faded again to a glow of light. The young woman lay unable to move, her breath caught in her throat.

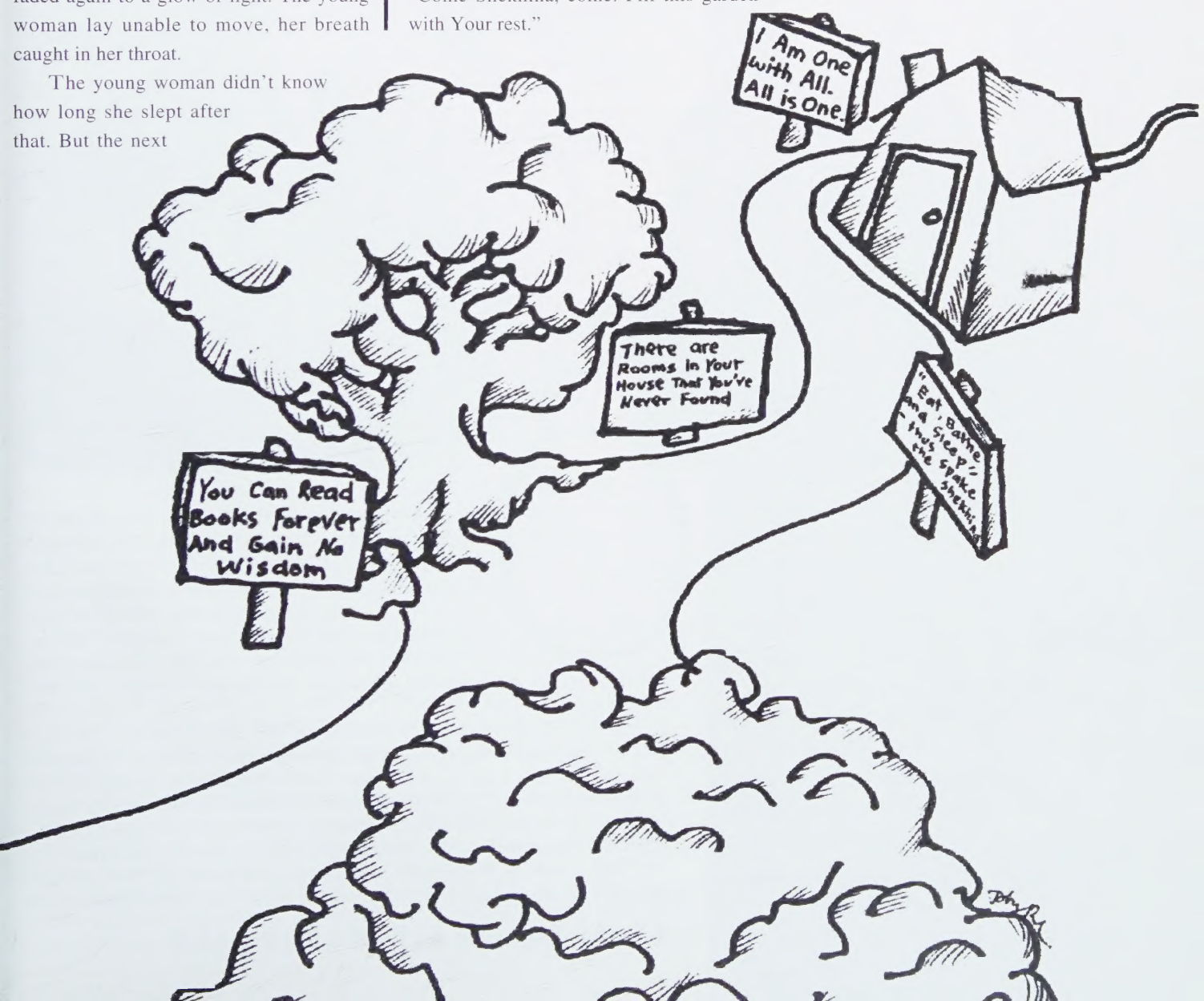
The young woman didn't know how long she slept after that. But the next time she opened her eyes, the sun was shining. She gathered up the pits of the fruits she'd eaten and went outside. There in the soil she planted a garden. At the center of the garden she placed a stone. On the stone she wrote these words: "I am one with all. All is one."

Years passed by. The seeds of the fruit grew into a mighty orchard. The young woman was no longer young. Now she was an old woman who carried her grandchildren.

Always on the seventh day, the old woman lit the candles and whispered the story of the calling of the Soul. "Come, Shekhina," she would say to the breeze that flickered the candle flames bright. "Come Shekhina, come. Fill this garden with Your rest."

Note: When this story, which has been adapted from The Storyteller's Goddess: Tales of the Goddess and Her Wisdom Around the World *by Carolyn McVickar Edwards, (Harper SanFrancisco, 1991), originally ran, the young student was portrayed as male. I phoned the author and asked her who I, as a female reader, was supposed to identify with in the story—the male student or the Shekhina? "That's a problem," she answered. I then asked her if she would consider re-writing the story with the student as female. Edwards replied enthusiastically. "I would have done that from the start," she said, "But I felt compelled, as a Christian writing about Judaism, to preserve the classic patriarchal male-female dichotomies of Judaism."*

— Hadar Dubowsky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YAFFA ELIACH'S

Pre-Holocaust Portraits

Hone and Golde Moszczenik (Moshchenik) and granddaughter, photographed by Eliach's grandmother, Alte Katz, a professional photographer. Hone was a builder, Golde a housewife, businesswoman, and *zogerke* — a woman who reads prayers in the women's section of the synagogue, for other women to repeat.

On June 23, 1941, German *Einsatzgruppen* [mobile killing squads] stormed into Ejszyszki [pronounced E-shish-key], a Jewish *shtetl* south of Vilna in Poland. 3500 Jews lived in Ejszyszki, a village that had harbored Jewish life since 1073. By the time the war was over, just 29 of these Jews were left alive. One of them was Yaffa Sonenson Eliach. She was only four when the Germans came; she survived because a Polish friend of her parents hid the family in a cave under a pigsty.

Today Eliach—who teaches Holocaust history and literature at Brooklyn College—has made a vocation of resurrecting the world that perished when the Nazis arrived. As a member of President Carter's Commission on the Holocaust (predecessor of the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Commission), Eliach had the opportunity to tour Warsaw, Treblinka, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Plazow, and Cracow—places indelibly stained with the blood of millions of Eastern European Jews.

"I was struck by the fact that a thousand years of Jewish life in Poland were reduced to mere images of victimization and death," she says. "There was no

BY YONA ZELDIS McDONOUGH

The Sonenson family, pictured here in 1935, was among the original founders of Ejszyszki, Poland in the 11th century. 236 members of this extended clan were killed by the Einsatzgruppen, Nazi mobile killing squads. Of the 17 grandchildren, only 4 survived.

record of the *yeshiva*, the schools, scholars, rabbis, merchants, artisans, enterprising women, Zionist and socialist organizations, community institutions or family life. For me it was like a double death—first being killed physically, and then the memory being killed, too."

That was when she vowed to commemorate the vibrant, diverse nature of Jewish experience that existed before the war. And as a woman whose mother and maternal grandmother had been professional photographers, she knew exactly how to do it: by amassing 8000 photographs of her former townspeople, 1500 of which will comprise a permanent exhibition at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

The story starts with Eliach's maternal grandfather, Yitzhak Uri Katz, who came to America in the 1890's and attended City College in New York, where he studied to become a pharmacist. However, he felt that the New World wouldn't allow him to observe his faith (he would have needed to keep the pharmacy open on Saturdays), so he returned to Ejszyszki. Before he did, he learned photography, hoping it would be a lucrative sideline, and he bought the equipment necessary to set up a portrait studio. When he returned to Ejszyszki and married, his wife, Alte, became his assistant and, later, an accomplished photographer in her own right.

After her husband's death in 1931, Alte Katz, a radical free-thinker who campaigned for women's equality, ran the studio by herself, an unusual and prestigious career for a women in those days. "She had a beautiful studio with a glass roof," recalls Eliach. And she had a special feeling for photographing children. Years later, when Eliach was sorting through the thousands of images that would become her book, she could easily pick out those that were taken by her grandmother because, she says, "I knew the poses she liked." It was through Alte Katz that Eliach's mother, Tzipporah Katz Sonenson, also entered the profession, studying with one of the finest portrait photographers of the day, Glauberman of Lida (then Poland, now Lithuania).

The search for these visual artifacts became a quest that lasted twelve years and sent Eliach to six continents, following all kinds of leads, talking to survivors, their friends, and investigating public records. She searched through libraries, archives, and the records of *landsmanschaften* [associations of Old World compatriots established in the New World], sifting through letters, diaries, marriage certificates, wedding invitations, birth registrations, passports, and, of course, thousands and thousands of photographs.

The vintage photos she uncovered—many taken by her maternal grandmother, one of Ejszyszki's two studio photographers—depict families, children, groups of young people, workers, and wedding scenes. "These images show people as they wished to be remembered," says Eliach. And indeed the woman in a fur coat and print scarf standing amid the snow-covered trees [p. 10], and the little girl with the big bow flanked by her grandparents [p. 8], have a touching formality made all the more poignant when one remembers the hideous way in which they

Alte and Uri Katz, Yaffa Eliach's maternal grandparents. Uri returned to the shteti after graduating from City College; after his death Alte took over his work as shteti photographer. Alte Katz was murdered by the Einsatzgruppen in September, 1941.

Top: Yaffa Sonenson Eliach with her father, Moshe Sonenson, summer 1941, at the entrance to their summer home in Ejszyszok. The photo was taken by Eliach's mother, Zipporah Katz Sonenson (bottom), who inherited her own mother's profession of photography. Incomprehensibly, she was murdered by anti-Semitic Polish partisans when she returned to her shtetl upon liberation, *after* having been in hiding for three years.

were killed. The young woman is Eliach's mother, shot fifteen times by Polish partisans who discovered her hidden in a storage space, infant son in her arms. Eliach was crouched behind her; she survived because her mother's dead body collapsed on top of her, concealing her from the Poles. The elderly couple lived in Ejszyszki; the man was a builder and his wife, a *zogerke* (the woman who led prayers in the women's section of the synagogue). All their children except one son emigrated to America. That son and his wife—parents of the little girl seen here—were neighbors of Eliach's parents. "We shared the same backyard," she remembers. The family was murdered by the Germans.

While Eliach strives to create an image of life, and not death, with her work, she nevertheless cannot forget that these were lives that ended brutally and before their time. In the trendy Soho offices of Ralph Appelbaum (the firm hired to design the tower at the D.C. Holocaust Memorial Museum), Eliach walks around and around a large-scale model of the tower, which will be the exhibit's permanent home. "I want something to introduce the exhibit's installation," she says quietly, but with authority. "An artifact—something to symbolize the destruction." The designers look puzzled so she explains: "When the Germans came, they rounded up the Jews into the town's marketplace. People came carrying their most precious possessions—a pair of brass candlesticks, a mandolin. Days later, I saw the same marketplace, now empty of people, but littered with all these objects. There was an autograph book, a shawl . . ." her voice trails off. "I want to convey that here." She turns to one of the designers and asks: "What about a yellow silk blouse on the floor of the exhibit? A dress? A shawl? A paper flower?" The designers remain silent.

Looking at their faces, puzzled and skeptical, she strides across the room to the boxes crammed with exhibit photographs. Everyone gathers around as she pores over a randomly selected photograph. Like many of the photos, a corner is bent and there are stains—grease? food? tears? These are not museum-quality prints nestled safely in archival boxes; instead, the pictures—none of which has been cropped for the exhibit—wear the marks of age, of long journeys and repeated handling. "These are all we have left to tell the story," says Eliach, trying to convey to the designers that something different is happening here, that the photos are the only remaining link to a lost world. "We must use them well."

Yona Zeldis McDonough *is a novelist and short story writer. She is currently at work on a children's book about biblical heroines.*

Photo: Uri Aftaf

Yaffa Eliach visiting Israel

Yaffa Eliach's 1500 photographs will be permanently housed in a specially designed tower at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., scheduled to open in 1993.

Called *Tower of Faces—Tower of Life*, the exhibit will be not only a vivid memorial to the nearly 4000 Jews of Ejszyszki and neighboring small towns who were murdered by German *Einsatzgruppen* and their local collaborators in a two-day period (September 25-26, 1941), but also to the more than 6000 small East European towns whose Jews were similarly killed.

The publication of Dr. Eliach's companion volume, tentatively titled *The Shtetl of Ejszyszki* (Little, Brown), is due to coincide with the opening of the show.

(Above) The chuppah before the ceremony. (Right) Judy and Rosanne with Rabbi Helen Ferris.

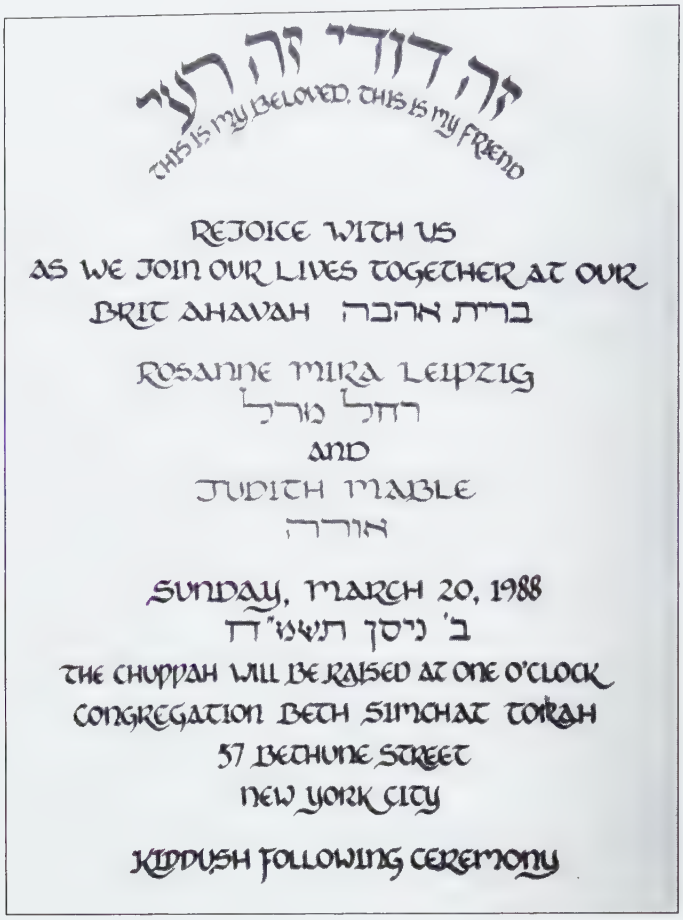
Lesbian Wedding

·ROSANNE & JUDY·

Rosanne Leipzig, a 41-year-old physician, and Judy Mable, a 45-year-old vascular clinician, were partners for two years before publicly consecrating their relationship under a wedding chuppah. What follows is an account not of their actual ceremony, but of the preparation for the wedding — a journey that surprisingly sowed much healing, joy, and empathy all around.

JUDY: Initially we had no concept of what type of ceremony to have. We were both very involved in the gay synagogue, and the more we talked, the clearer it became that we wanted a Jewish ceremony. So we bought a book called *The New Jewish Wedding*. Every night we read a chapter together. I had never thought it would ever be possible for me to have, for lack of a better word, a wedding. So for me, even thinking about being able to have such a ceremony was exciting.

ROSANNE: One important aspect of preparing for it was that the process really emboldened us to come out. For me, it started when we sat down to put together a guest list. I kept feeling that had I done this as a heterosexual wedding several years before, when my parents were alive, there were many relatives that I would have invited. When I sat down to make this guest list, I realized that because I was gay I had really distanced myself from many members of my family. I have a very large extended family, and I had no idea how they felt about



me or how they would feel about this ceremony. I had always just gone under the assumption that since my mother had had difficulty with my being gay, the rest of the family would too. But when we started to figure out whom to invite, I said, "I have no reality check on this at all. Let's just see."

What we did was to send out a postcard to everyone we wanted to invite early on, before the details were set, just letting them know to save the date. And then, to the family members to whom I wasn't out, I sent a cover letter that said:

> Judy and I have decided to share our lives together and will be having a *Brit Ahavah* [the Hebrew term we coined for this, meaning, literally, a covenant of love].
>
> I'm sorry I haven't spoken directly with you about this before. Over the years my fears of rejection have kept me from being open and close with many people who mean a great deal to me. Now, to my delight, my own growth and my relationship with Judy have helped me arrive at a comfortable place where I can share this important step with the people I care about the most.
>
> I hope you will be able to share our *simcha* [happy event] with us, but if not, I hope we stay more closely in touch.

We sent this out to about sixty people, and we presumed that out of that we would hear from twenty, and three would come. Well, were we surprised. We got back the most beautiful letters from almost everyone we'd written. Thirty of these people ended up coming, all from out of town, including seventy-year-old cousins and aunts.

JUDY: Rosanne's family also sent wonderful material for the *chuppah*, which is the canopy under which Jewish weddings are held. We had decided to make our own *chuppah*, so on the postcard we requested fabric from all of our friends and family members; we asked for any piece of fabric that was significant to them. Then, after

When I sat down to make the guest list, I realized that because I was gay I had distanced myself from many members of my family.

the mailman had lugged up seventy or eighty packages of material for us, we sewed it all together. It contained everything from babies' blankets to wedding dresses to pieces of fabric designed especially for the *chuppah*.

ROSANNE: Much of what we got back from members of my family were items that had belonged to my late parents or to my grandparents. It was really very moving.

JUDY: I have a much smaller family than Rosanne. My father is alive; my mother is dead. I have a sister, a niece and a nephew. My sister has been married twice, and both her current husband and her ex-husband came, which was interesting! My family had not been together since my mom died thirteen years ago, so this was very special.

The most amazing thing for me was having my father there. He had been a career Navy officer for thirty years and had always been a rigid man. When he learned I was gay, he was not too pleased, to say the least. For him to witness this event was extraordinary. He spent a good part of the time reflecting on how he behaved when I was growing up. He began to realize what a tyrant he had been. He also cried, wishing my mother could have been there. Most extraordinary for me, though, was the fact that he was there, and that he has accepted Rosanne and been supportive of the relationship. I think he has grown with us, and, at sixty-eight, he's changed. It felt like a miracle to have him share that day with me.

ROSANNE: The other part of the *chuppah* story is bittersweet. When we first told our friends, Shelly and Jay, that we wanted this ceremony, Shelly looked at us skeptically and said, "What do you want to do something like that for?" He started saying the old stuff about aping heterosexual tradition, and so on. Then, as the four of us sat and talked about it, he got more and more enthused about the idea. We talked about how much we wanted to celebrate our love with the people we cared about. Finally we got to the part about wanting to make the *chuppah*, and he said he wanted to embroider the center piece for us using our Hebrew names.

It turned out that while he was still working on it he was hospitalized with AIDS. He worked feverishly and finally finished it. It has our Hebrew names, and then on the bottom it says, "With love from Shelly and Jay." The day after he finished embroidering it, he lost the use of his right hand. He regained use for a short time and signed our *ketubah*, which is the document stating the contract of the wedding. He died a few months later.

We used many of the traditional symbols from a Jewish wedding, sometimes modifying them for our purposes. We commissioned an artist to make our *ketubah* [a wedding contract, often wrought as a beautiful piece of art].

JUDY: We went to a Hebrew arts fair, where we met this *ketubah*-maker. We decided to ask her if she would custom-make a *ketubah* for us. Twenty minutes later, we were still pacing around, passing her again and again: "Should we? Shouldn't we? No, yes."

ROSANNE: Finally we went up to her, and I said, "I think you've probably never been asked this question before, but would you do a *ketubah* for two women?" About two seconds passed, and she looked at us and said, "Is it a Jewish ceremony?" We said, "Yes!" She was initially reluctant to use the term *ketubah*, because she said that to her that term was specific to a heterosexual ceremony. That made us uncomfortable, and for a while we weren't sure we wanted her to do it, as we didn't want to work with someone who wasn't completely supportive. Then we went to her studio to reopen the discussion. You could see her grappling. Within half an hour, she was calling it a *ketubah*.

In planning our *Brit Ahavah*, we met and dealt with people who had never thought of gays and lesbians as human beings with the same needs and wants as other people. Most of them began to relate to us as a couple in love, as lesbians in love. There's a term in Hebrew, *tikkun olam*, which means trying to mend or repair the world. We began to have the feeling that by doing all this we were starting to participate in that process of healing. People who had never before recognized their encounters with gay people began to see gays as living, breathing human beings.

JUDY: Sometimes, of course, we weren't sure that people knew what was going on even after a transaction. For instance, we had told the woman who designed our rings that we wanted to have them engraved in Hebrew. She lives in Connecticut, but she said that the engraving would have to be done by the Chassidic men in the jewelry district in New York. We were a little concerned about how these Orthodox Jewish men would deal with all this, but we went ahead and sent her the inscriptions, which read: *Ahoovot Chaiim* [beloveds for life] 3/20/88.

Soon the designer called to tell us there was a big problem. She had taken the rings to New York, and the engraver had told her that "Whoever wrote this inscription does not know Hebrew." All Hebrew nouns have a specific gender, and to the engraver it was impossible that we would want both rings inscribed with the female form of beloveds for life. I told her to tell him to engrave it exactly the way it was written. So it ended up being done correctly, but I don't think it ever occurred to him that the rings were really for two women. I bet he's still convinced that someone had made a mistake.

We were also concerned when we ordered the *yarmulkes* (skullcaps). The people that run these stores are generally very Orthodox and reactionary; they're the same people that kept New York from having a gay rights law for fifteen years. So when we went in, we hemmed and hawed trying to decide whether or not we should have our names and the date stamped on them. Finally we decided to go for broke. So Rosanne wrote out: *Brit Ahavah*, Judy and Rosanne, 3/20/88. This salesman read it and said, "Oh we'll have to make up a new stamp. This isn't a Bar Mitzvah." And we said, "No, it's not a Bar Mitzvah." We had written Judy and Rosanne, and we were waiting for him to ask what this *Brit Ahavah* was all about. He never asked. We went ahead and ordered the *yarmulkes*. As we were leaving, he said to Rosanne, "So, it's your son that's having the Bar Mitzvah?"

He assumed that we were having a huge event. In our synagogue both men and women wear yarmulkes; traditionally only men wear them. So since we were ordering 150, he assumed that 300 people would be attending the event. When we went to pick them up, another customer asked him what they were for. All he said was, "Oh, they're for a big affair. A very big affair." I remember walking out of that store and beginning to laugh uncontrollably. We were hysterical for blocks. It was like, "Well, we did that. Let's see what we can do next."

We also worked with straight people who knew exactly what was going on and who were incredibly supportive. We had a wonderful band-leader, a straight woman, who kept calling us up and asking, "Did you get your dresses yet? What did you decide to wear?" She was just really excited and concerned. She was great. It all kept making us bolder and bolder.

A collection of objects from the wedding — the invitation, yarmulkes ordered for the guests and those worn by Rosanne and Judy, the velvet bag that contains the broken glass, a candle from the wedding.

In planning our brit ahavah *ceremony, we met and dealt with people who had never thought of gays and lesbians as human beings with the same needs and wants as other people.*

ROSANNE: Actually, the biggest challenge we faced was getting the initial approval to have a ceremony at our synagogue. Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, New York's gay and lesbian synagogue, was founded in 1973. During its early years, it was decided that the commitment ceremonies would not take place at the synagogue. I think that decision was both a product of the times ("as gay people we do not want to mimic the oppressive heterosexual institution of marriage") and internalized homophobia ("How will we able to control this? Some people will be with a different partner every other week!"). We had to lobby both the synagogue board and the religious committee. It was interesting that some of their concerns were not all that different from those expressed above, but there was an overall understanding of our desire to have our *Brit Ahavah* at our spiritual home. We finally prevailed, and so became the first couple to have a commitment ceremony at the synagogue in its then fifteen-year history.

When we first told our friends that we wanted this ceremony, one looked at us skeptically and said, "What do you want to do something like that for—aping heterosexual tradition?"

It meant a lot to me to have a traditional Jewish ceremony. I had been very involved with Judaism growing up, but I had distanced myself from it with coming out. I used to say that there was no place for a single woman in Judaism let alone a gay woman. When my mother died, I wanted to follow the tradition to say the Mourner's Kaddish daily, for eleven months in a synagogue. But I never found a synagogue where I felt comfortable. People would ask, "Who are you? You're not married? Would you like to go out with my son?" And so as soon as you said, "No," the openness of the conversation ended. When I moved to New York and found the gay synagogue I felt as if I'd come home. It was the first time I had ever been able to combine these integral but completely separate parts of my life. So for me the ceremony was a celebration of our relationship, our spirituality and my return to Judaism.

Many people said it was the most Jewish wedding they'd ever been to. [The ceremony is reprinted in the book *Ceremonies of the Heart.*] The reception was absolutely amazing. The band said they had never been to anything where people were so incredibly high. The dance floor was unbelievable. Everyone was dancing with everyone: gay, straight, men, women, young, old.

It was also incredible to have all these people from different parts of our lives in one room at the same time. It was very therapeutic, after having kept these parts of our lives separate from each other for so long. Not only was my family there, along with all of my gay friends, but everyone from my work as well. I'm a doctor, and I'm on the faculty at a medical school. I had invited my whole division, and every single one of them showed up. The same thing happened with Judy's colleagues.

JUDY: We have this one picture of my boss, who has snow white hair, dancing with his wife. They were both scared to death to come to our ceremony, but they wanted to be supportive. In the center of this one picture, the two of them are dancing. All around them are men dancing with men, and women dancing with women. The two of them ended up having a great time. Here were all these different kinds of people having a wonderful time together. My aunt who lives in Vermont was there, along with the dairy farmer she's dating. The woman I had my first love affair with in sixth grade was there. All the parts of my life were there.

Our bosses lit candles at this candle-lighting ceremony we had. My boss is someone I've known for twenty years. He's a real wise-guy, and I never trust him when he opens his mouth. "Well," he said, "Judy has been like a third daughter to me, and today's she fulfilling my fantasy." I was thinking, "Oh, Lord." I didn't know what to expect. "One daughter got married last year, one's getting married later this year, but Judy is the only one to snare a Jewish doctor." It brought the house down. People were roaring with laughter.

ROSANNE: Then we lit the last candle with Shelly and Jay, and we said the *Shehechiyanu*, the prayer that thanks God for letting us live until this point in time. It was very emotional. Everyone knew that Shelly was very ill. It was amazing that he had been able to get to the ceremony.

Everyone danced, and they lifted us up in chairs, decorated us, and danced us around. I have always had trouble with the idea that I need to have outside forces or other people validate my lifestyle or my relationship, yet there was something so incredibly high about having all of these people affirm our being together. To have them there while we danced together, while we slow danced together.

I was raised in a family where it was expected that you would get married immediately after college. So much so that at one point during college I told my mother I was going to drop out; I knew I wasn't going to get married, and I figured that if I didn't graduate I wouldn't have to worry about it. I kept feeling the pressure to get married everywhere, and it seemed as though the pressure just increased as I got older. So it was strange to me when people in our community talked about commitment ceremonies as mocking heterosexual experience, because for me the creation of our *Brit Ahavah* was so different from a heterosexual wedding. The fact that gays and lesbians do this against all odds makes the whole process completely different.

It took many years for me to find the right person to live my life with. When I finally found her, it felt completely right and natural to have this kind of celebration. It put weddings in an entirely different context for me. People kept asking, "Aren't you nervous? Aren't you scared?" Why would I be scared? I had waited a lifetime for this.

Adapted from Ceremonies of the Heart *(Becky Butler, editor, The Seal Press, 1990) with permission from the publisher.*

I enjoy LILITH tremendously and have given numerous gift subscriptions to friends. I find it to be fun, exciting, at times spiritually uplifting and certainly informative. I was especially moved by Hedy Markowitz's piece in your last issue [Summer '92], and by Blu Greenberg on the feminist changes in Orthodoxy.

One thing troubles me: the ad for Good Vibrations [Summer '92]. Tell me, are we so impoverished that we are forced to accept advertising for sex toys in a publication aimed at raising the intellectual and spiritual consciousness of Jewish women? I have no quarrel with sex toys, as such, or their users, either male or female. But I felt that the ad was inappropriate for LILITH and in poor taste.

SONIA LEVITIN, *Beverly Hills, CA*

LILITH has received several responses to this ad. It struck us in reading them that, as women, we seem always willing to discuss pain, self-deprivation and negative body image. Are pleasure and entitlement the last taboo? Readers, please respond.

— Leslie Margulies, Advertising Manager

I was delighted with "Guarding the Garden" [Spring '92], the new play about Adam, Lilith, and Eve. I was surprised, however, by your statement "women of Eden have their own God. . .who is different from the men's version." As I understood the play, women and men have one and the same God. This God is none other than the God we meet in the Torah. But this God has more than one way of speaking to people.

RABBI NANCY FUCHS-KREIMER
Wyncote, PA

I enjoyed "The Cult of Miriam" [Spring '92]. There are other briefly named biblical women to pique our interest: Sheerah, who founded cities [1 Chronicles 7:24], and, among the "chiefs" of Edom, several chieftainesses. The gender of these "chiefs" is for the main part assiduously avoided in the Hebrew, but Timnah and Oholibamah are certainly female [Genesis 36:40-41].

JESSICA AMANDA SOLOMON
Seattle, WA

To clarify your article "Beauty is the Mother of Death" [Spring '92]: Ethical wills are not necessarily "writings from our deathbeds to those we love." Many of the authors whose wills appear (including myself!) are very much alive and hope to pass on to our children, while we are still vibrantly alive, our personal ethical beliefs.

RANDEE ROSENBERG FRIEDMAN
San Diego, CA

Letty Cottin Pogrebin [Kol Ishah, Summer '92] writes that "we have learned that the win/lose strategy is what keeps Jews and Palestinians in that eternal maze. . ." On the contrary. The current maze is the direct result of the initial Palestinian and pan-Arab refusal to accept the partition of Palestine into two states in 1948. A simplistic statement that both sides must "agree that both peoples deserve a homeland," underestimates the virulence of Arab hatred against Israel.

Reading "Israeli Bureaucracy Limits Women's Access to Information on Abortion" [Summer '92] . . . My own experiences in Israel have not yielded the stereotypical one Rachel Kadish describes.

I hope to see LILITH open its pages to articles written by a broad spectrum of Jewish women. Otherwise, I can't help worrying that I am reading a one-dimensional, "politically correct" journal disguised as intellectual commentary.

SHARMAN YOFFIE-SIDMAN
Brooklyn, NY

The name of my co-author, Andrea Boroff Eagan, was misspelled in "RU 486" [Summer '92]. She writes for *the Village Voice, Ms., Lear's, Vogue,* and is the author of *Why Am I So Miserable If These Are the Best Years of My Life?*, a guide for teen girls, and *The Newborn Mother: Stages of Her Growth*. She was a founder and first president of the National Writers Union.

SHARON LIEBERMAN
Evanston, IL

Praise for

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"Rina Lazarus is a hero of biblical fire and complexity... Faye Kellerman's mysteries pulse with life."—MICHAEL DORRIS

"Rina is a calm island of sanity and love, but the tides swirling around Peter Decker threaten to overwhelm him."—*Rave Reviews*

"This combination — a solid mystery and the rich details of Decker's home life — has been a hallmark of Faye Kellerman's fine series....It's unlikely that Decker and Rina will ever wear out their welcomes."—*Mostly Murder*

False Prophet

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Politics '92

Israel: This Time More Women in the Knesset!

Eleven of the 120 new Knesset members are women; a sign to Israeli feminists that women have scored real successes in the '92 elections. Although the number may not seem substantial, there were only eight women in the previous Knesset; women's representation has increased by almost 40%. Close to 40 women, representatives of 20 parties, competed in the country-wide elections. The eleven elected women come from five parties. Ten of them represent the four largest parties, and two have been appointed Cabinet Ministers. Leslie Sacks, Spokeswoman for The Israel Women's Network, umbrella organization for diverse women's groups, comments that in Israel, "never before have so many women been so close to the real centers of political power, where they can make decisions that will really affect the lives of women."

In addition, for the third time in Israeli history (following 1948 with one seat and 1977 with no seats), a Women's Party ran, though it failed to win a seat. Ruth Rasnic of the Women's Party says "the fact that we ran pushed women's issues into the public awareness. The exposure we created forced the other parties to deal with questions that they otherwise would have ignored."

All of the eleven women elected have been active proponents of the advancement of women. Naomi Blumental (Likud), born in Israel and living in Ramat Efal (near Tel-Aviv), represented Israel on the U.N. Committee on the Status of Women between 1989 and 1991. Yael Dayan (Labor), former officer and spokesperson for the Israeli Defense Forces (daughter of the legendary politician and general, Moshe Dayan), has long been active in the Network of Women for Peace. Naomi Chazan (Meretz), professor of Political Science and African Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, is Head of the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace and founder of the Network of Women for Peace. The other women include Labor Knesset members Ora Namir, Masha Lubelsky, and Dalia Itzik; Limor Livnat of Likud, Meretz's Shulamith Aloni and Anat Maor; Tamar Gozansky of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, and Esther Salamovitz of Tzomet. Namir, Minister for the Environment, headed a government-sponsored commission for the study of women's rights in Israel. Aloni, the liberal and controversial Minister of Education, now oversees all Israeli public schools — including the Orthodox ones.

With its sticker and slogan campaign "Women Choose Parties That Choose Women," The Israel Women's Network

ELECTION '92 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The U.S.A — Women Make Waves

The Women's Caucus of the 1992 Democratic National Convention was the most inspiring event I have attended in many years. Hundreds of women and men gathered for daily briefings on issues of importance to women. Here are gleanings from my notes and from those of women observers from the Commission on Women's Equality of the American Jewish Congress:

- Women comprise 54% of the voting population.
- Ten million more women than men are eligible to vote in the United States.

At the Women's Campaign Strategy Workshop, NOW Executive Vice-President Kim Dandy outlined myths told to women to discourage their candidacies, along with responses to them. Some examples to empower us, now and in future races:

MYTH: You have to be traditionally qualified, *i.e.* a lawyer.

RESPONSE: Women have run successfully by saying that they have skills legislators are lacking. We need fewer lawyers and more nurses, teachers, social workers, and other traditionally female professionals in government.

MYTH: Don't run for higher office, run for lower office and get experience, and don't run unless you are positive you can win.

RESPONSE: On average, men run for the first time in their mid-twenties. Women wait until their mid-forties. That hurts women in an arena where seniority is essential for influence. Even if a woman loses an election, she gains visibility for a future campaign.

MYTH: Don't run as a woman. You need to talk about crime and other "men things."

RESPONSE: Men are told to discuss women's issues. If women candidates ignore these issues, they will lose women's support. Furthermore, certain "women's issues," like family leave, are important to all voters in this election.

A few speech highlights from the convention:

Gloria Steinem, on the Clintons: "Bill and Hillary have been *living* equality for all of their [married] lives . . . [I hope for] a time when the husband of a President can keep his own name."

Rep. Barbara Boxer, of California: "If the accusation against Clarence Thomas were . . . fixing a basketball game, the charges would have been thoroughly investigated."

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton of Washington, D.C., on "the year of the woman": "Although there is a lot of sisterhood, there are not enough sisters in the House of Representatives."

I left the meetings convinced that each of us must make her own contribution — in time, in energy, in money, and in votes. As Illinois Senatorial candidate **Carol Moseley Braun** (whose favorite sign at the March for Women's Lives was "Menopausal Women Nostalgic for Choice") stated, "the Constitution was written for a small group of white, male property owners. They gave us the right to vote, but not the right to rule." It is about time for the women of the United States to assume our proper share of the right to rule.

—Deborah Fuller Hahn

established in May 1991 a cross-party women's forum, with one representative from each party. The forum organized workshops for new political activists, sent out a suggested platform on women's issues to all the parties, and disseminated information on women's issues to candidates, parties, and the general public. Candidates began to see women as a constituency whose vote the parties wanted to win. Throughout the elections, the media continued to highlight women's issues.

The issues facing Israeli women include high unemployment rates, wages 30% less than men's, restrictive marriage and divorce laws, continued violence against women, and the struggle for affirmative action in all fields, including politics. The new Knesset members have formed a women's lobby to address some of these concerns. Says new MK Maor: "The activities of the election have proven that women from all the parties can unite and work constructively towards common goals. We have proven that without denying the things that divide us, we can also rise above these when necessary and work together on the things that unite us."

— Eetta Prince-Gibson

Below, from left to right: Naomi Blumental, Naomi Chazan, Tamar Gozansky, Yael Davan.

Scene on the Streets

This summer I made a conscious effort to join the mass political activities planned to coincide with the Democratic convention. Every grassroots political group was gearing up for their actions. . . posters and banners were designed and produced, phone trees activated, civil disobedience and clinic defense trainings were offered throughout the city. The *Village Voice* ran a map of Manhattan with times and locations of demonstrations so that the well-organized activist could manage her time.

Between July 7 and July 17, I helped block Citicorp Bank, awakened at the crack of dawn for abortion clinic defense, joined groups at Columbus Circle for two separate marches and rallies, and received half a dozen phone calls as a leaf on different phone trees. At each action the theme of repossession was the same . . ."Take Back Our Streets," "Take Back Our Bodies," "Take Back Our Lives," "Take Back the White House."

Rage at worsening economic conditions, AIDS-related deaths, racist violence, and continued attacks on women's bodies in the streets and in the courts was exploding on the streets of New York. This year's reminders were fresh in women's memories. . . the Clarence Thomas hearings, the L.A. riots, the William Kennedy Smith and Mike Tyson rape trials, and the recent Casey abortion decision. Many of the chants were responses to the year's events: "We Believe Anita!" "We're women, we're angry and we vote!" "William Kennedy Smith meet Thelma & Louise," "Bush in 92-NOT!" The slogans reflected the anger festering: "I fuck to come—not to conceive," and "Breast Cancer: An Epidemic."

The different actions, like well-planned military attacks, came one after the other from all directions and communities. At one march, an air horn blasted every seven minutes, marking one AIDS death every seven minutes. On women's rights alone there were (to name just a few): a civil disobedience blocking the Holland Tunnel, a demonstration at Times Square in response to the Casey decision, a march across the Brooklyn Bridge to a rally at City Hall in Manhattan, a Women's Action Coalition counter-convention to let Democrats know that there are *10 million* more women than men voters, a week of abortion clinic defense in response to Operation Rescue, and a Take Back Our Lives March and rally outside the convention center.

As I walked down the street, chanting the all-purpose "A People United Will Never Be Defeated" for the *n*th time, my heart was pounding. Committed and concerned New Yorkers were on the streets demonstration after demonstration. With our voices ringing out against the backdrop of New York City traffic and sweat dripping down our backs from the summer sun and humidity, here, in the heart of New York City, we were making waves.

— Hadar Dubowsky

Want to help create change this year and in U.S. elections to come? Here's a list of political organizations women can support with financial contributions, and which, in turn, support women in politics.

EMILY's List *(Early Money Is Like Yeast—it makes the dough rise)*
1112 16th Street NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 887-1957
Collects funds for pro-choice Democratic women candidates.

Fund for the Feminist Majority
1600 Wilson Blvd., Suite 704
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 522-2214
Funds various feminist campaigns.

League of Women Voters
1730 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 429-1965
Nonpartisan organization, provides information on voting and candidates.

National Jewish Democratic Council
711 2nd Street NE Suite 100
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 544-7636
Supports Jewish interests and candidates in the Democratic party.

National Organization for Women *(NOW)*
1000 16th Street #700
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 331-0066
In addition to other activities, endorses and campaigns for women candidates and, via local chapters, sponsors public debates and informational forums.

National Women's Party
Sewall-Belmont House
144 Constitution Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 546-1210
Works for the passage of the Equal Rights Ammendment.

National Women's Political Caucus
1275 K Street NW #750
Washington, DC 20005
Works to increase women's political power at all levels of political and governmental activity.

The WISH List
(Women In the Senate and House)
730 Columbus Ave., Suite 187
New York, NY 10025
Collects funds for Republican women candidates.

Women's Campaign Fund
120 Maryland Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 544-4484
Supports local, state and national pro-choice women candidates.

Women's Equity Action League *(WEAL)*
733 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
Works for pro-women legislation.

VICTORY

★

The war was over. They said so on the radio every five minutes.

by Perle Besserman

The war was over. They said so on the radio every five minutes, and the newspapers were covered with big black headlines announcing VICTORY. Neighbors who hadn't talked to each other in years were hugging and crying in the courtyard of our apartment house, and truck drivers blew their horns on the streets all day long. For me, it was good riddance to blackouts and air raid sirens, victory gardens and ugly khaki socks that itched—not to mention the "sneaky Jap" movies featured every weekend at the Livonia Avenue Dump for three years. The war had been going on for as long as I could remember, and now it was over. The grownups would have nothing to talk about at dinner, and the radio broadcasters would lose their jobs for lack of commentaries that would enrage my father and make him sit down and write letters to H.V. Kaltenborn. With the war over, the outside world wouldn't count for so much anymore, and all our little private troubles would be harder to ignore.

The neighborhood block association planned a party that covered our voting district, and every street in Brooklyn was caked in bunting. In open contempt for the food shortages, the local butcher had strung whole salamis from every light post on Powell Street. The Veterans of Foreign Wars on Christopher Street featured a marching band composed entirely of retired World War One musicians, not one of them under sixty-five. Everyone was shouting and applauding like mad as the old geezers blew their hearts out; even Murray Rosenblum's father, who lifted weights and walked around the neighborhood in his air raid warden's helmet during the days when there were no air raids—even he cried.

The ladies of Sackman Street formed a "food brigade." My mother, my aunt Ida, and Hennie Frayman stayed up all night before the block party, boiling and skinning potatoes for the huge potato salad that was supposed to decorate the forty wooden folding tables that Sam Flinker Movers had donated for the occasion. The owner of the Riverdale Avenue kosher deli, who had a reputation for hoarding food, surprised everyone by presenting the block association with one hundred pounds of chopped liver free of charge. By noon the streets were jammed with people stuffing themselves, blowing horns, and drinking beer from a pot-bellied Rheingold keg that the brewery had painted red, white, and blue and set up on a pushcart at the Livonia and Stone Avenue crossing.

I sat upstairs watching the celebration from the Frayman's bedroom window, looking out for my mother in the crowd behind the food tables. My parents thought it would be safer for me to watch the party from upstairs, where I could see what was going on rather than be crushed underfoot by the grownups. It was a good idea. I sat around for as long as I felt like it, then amused myself by jumping up and down on Hennie and Max Frayman's double bed.

"It's a once in a lifetime. . . " Max said, as he escorted me upstairs. "There's some pumpernickel with tuna fish in the refrigerator if you get hungry."

Max suggested that I lean on his old car pillow on the windowsill so I wouldn't scrape my elbows; then he left me to myself. I could follow his bald spot for about five minutes as he wove through the masses of people toward the table where Hennie and my mother were dishing out potato salad; I lost him when he disappeared behind a Veteran tuba player. I sat there for two hours, staring down at the grownups going crazy. Deanna Miller's father got drunk and tried to make a speech standing on a table, but his wife coaxed him down and everyone cheered. For part of the time, I must have dozed off, but the noisy throb of the refrigerator woke me up again.

At nine o'clock, well after they'd turned on the floodlights, it got chilly. I must have been sleeping, because I

Paintings by Sherry Zvares Sandhaus

forgot where I was for a minute, and my head was aching. Every time I tried to lift it, I saw purple sparklers flashing up out of the car pillow. When I could turn my neck about six inches, I thought I saw my uncle Harry standing in the doorway. But I knew I was dreaming when I saw him jumping around on the bed and disappearing again. Someone in the street screamed then, and that woke me up for good. I was scared of being alone in the dark. I rushed through the kitchen and out the front door, running down the stairs two at a time to my parents' apartment on the ground floor, where there were plenty of people clogging the lobby. The door was open and I went inside. My father was standing in the living room wrapped in his prayer shawl as if there were no party and no parade, nothing going on at all, as if the biggest war in the world hadn't just ended and been won by the Americans. He was standing around praying as if it were any old regular week night.

He turned and saw me watching him from the foyer.

"Dad," I said, "the war is over, why aren't you outside celebrating?"

"I *am* celebrating," he said. "I'm celebrating the One who ended it. . . " He spread his prayer shawl open and motioned me to him. I snuggled into the safe, warm white cloth and tucked it around me while he went back to his prayers.

★ ★ ★

"I tell you it's scarlet fever," Doctor Adler said.

"And I tell you that you're a quack who'd better go back to med school and learn the difference between measles and scarlet fever," my father said.

I watched the doctor shake the thermometer and I looked into his face over his Benjamin Franklin glasses as he stuck it under my tongue. He was a family friend as well as our doctor, so my father talked to him the way he talked to everyone else—telling him off.

"You sound like a Christian Scientist, Jack," Dr. Adler said. "They don't believe in doctors either."

"Don't get defensive," my father said.

"How can I not get defensive if for fifteen years you've been contradicting every medical diagnosis I ever made in this family? Either become a doctor yourself, if you're such a superior diagnostician, or say some hocus pocus over the kid and become a Christian Scientist healer!"

Doctor Adler was over six feet tall, and my father was about five foot five. The two of them standing next to each other near my bed reminded me of Mutt and Jeff. If I hadn't had such a terrible headache, I'd have been laughing. But now nothing seemed funny. Doctor Adler just shrugged. My father got madder. "Who said I called a *doctor* in the first place?" he yelled.

"Yell all you want, I'm going to have to put up a quarantine sign and notify the Board of Health," Doctor Adler said, ignoring him.

"Over my dead body! Nobody is posting any misdiagnosed disease notices on my door!"

My mother came in then to see what all the

Even a crazy family was better than a broken one.

★

yelling was about. She'd been boiling instruments in the green porcelain pan that we reserved especially for "sick days." She wore large yellow rubber gloves and her hair, which she hadn't combed since morning, stuck out in wisps from under her pink hairnet. My mother had wanted to be a doctor ever since she was a little girl in Siberia, but the Bolsheviks came and took away all her father's money, and the family had fled to Palestine and then America. She hadn't become a doctor, or anything but an Orthodox man's wife and the mother of his daughter and son, but she always acted like a doctor around the house. Actually, she knew a lot about Siberian folk remedies, and she spent the night wrapping me in cold compresses to bring the fever down. My greatest fear was that my mother would call the cupping lady, as I'd seen her do when Bubba Sarah was sick, and have the old witch with the black satchel stick about fifty hideous glass cups all over my back and belly, pocketing my skin in to the glass until I was covered with red circles. The cups were supposed to suck the fever out, and they worked on Bubba Sarah. But I thought the whole thing was somehow un-American, and I feared the cupping lady worse than death.

My greatest fear was the cupping lady — she was somehow un-American.

★

My mother said nothing about the cupping-lady, though, and I could see her now from under a film, as if time and form were vanishing and everything around appeared to be visible from the inside of an egg, viscous white, with me at the gooey center.

"What's the matter here? Why are you screaming?" my mother said, creasing the bridge of her nose.

"Adler has decided to plaster the walls. He's finally found his true metier—paperhanging," my father said viciously.

Everyone stopped short then. Clearly, my father had made a booboo, comparing Dr. Adler to Hitler. Half the Adler family had been wiped out in Auschwitz.

"What are you saying?" my mother shrieked. She pretended to spit, "Poo! Poo!" Buryat-style, in order to eradicate the evil spirit my father had called down. "Maybe you have a fever, too. You're certainly not talking sense!" She looked at Doctor Adler apologetically. "You know Jack, how he gets excited. He doesn't mean a word of it."

"It's all right. . . I know. Would I keep coming back if I took him seriously?" the doctor, always the good sport in such battles with my father, assured her.

My mother looked at my father as if she were studying him under a microscope. Then she turned to the doctor and asked what was really wrong with me. "Tell me the truth," she said softly. Doctor Adler said it was scarlet fever, and my father started mumbling again.

"Scarlet fever?" my mother repeated in a whisper.

"Don't listen to this quack," my father said, shooting forward. "It's measles, I tell you!"

That was the last I heard before falling into a weird dream where I saw him standing over the bed as the great doctor Maimonides, wearing loose robes and a turban. When I opened my eyes, the egg white blur had lifted, and I could see my father clearly. He was ripping the quarantine notice in two. My mother was standing next to him and Dr. Adler was gone.

"If you're going to act crazy, I'll have to call Harry," my mother said, gathering the leftover sponges, cotton swabs, and thermometer, and placing them on her special "sickness tray" which she kept in a cupboard under the sink all by itself. "I'll need someone here to watch her while I go out to fill the prescriptions."

My father rubbed his hands together. "You don't need any prescriptions. She'll be okay tomorrow."

"You said that yesterday, and look at her," my mother said, nearly in tears now.

"Why bring Harry into it?" my father said.

My mother pressed her lips into a line and, narrowing her eyes, said, "Look. . . I believe Adler. It's scarlet fever. . . denying it won't make it go away. We've got to arrange something with Hennie about keeping the baby upstairs."

"No!"

"Will you stop your yelling!"

Now she was yelling too. If I could have died right then and stopped them from fighting, I would have. I hated it when they fought. I held my breath and prayed for them to stop, but they only got louder and angrier, forgetting that I was lying there and could hear every word: his blaming my mother for my wildness and my inborn hatred for "Jewishness," her accusing him of "looking down" on her family for not being religious enough; then his listing all of my uncle Harry's insults and her family's arrogance, treating him like a slave in the factory, and then her saying he was jealous because people all liked her and her family and didn't like him and his mother and their obnoxious "German ways." Then all her old misery came out, and she went on about life meaning nothing if all she could count on was getting up and watching children and cooking all day without ever going to a play or concert, or meeting "better people" at cultural events and not sitting around serving Max and Hennie Frayman dinner all the time on Sackman Street. And then she complained about his mother, who came and looked into her pots and criticized her "unhealthy" cooking, and the ladies from the sisterhood at my yeshiva, the Beis Yakov School for Girls, who thought she wasn't Orthodox enough and talked behind her back, saying she was breaking the Sabbath laws by using an electric timer to turn the lights on and off. . .

This time it was I who stopped it, hearing myself croak like a frog, "Mom. . . Dad. . . please. . . "

"Are you awake?" My father walked up to the bed and took my hand. "I'm sorry. Maybe if I leave for a while. . . maybe Mom's right. . . if Harry and Ida come and help it'll be better. I'm not good around sick people."

"Oh, Dad, don't go, please," I croaked again.

"It's better if Harry comes. He'll bring you books to read."

"I can't read. . . anything," I whimpered, too weak to say another word.

I tried crying out for him to stay, but nothing came. I

wanted to beg them not to get divorced, like Freddie Field's parents had a year before. I didn't want to live like poor Freddie, eating only sandwiches for dinner, and having a "single mother" who brought different boyfriends home every month. Even a crazy family was better than a broken one. Besides, nobody really understood about me and my uncle Harry, about how he always scared me a little whenever we were alone, but how he also understood me better than anyone else in the family, about how I wanted to be an actress and eat in restaurants, and go horseback riding. But none of this got said, and my father walked out the door. If maybe I could confess, I thought, he'd come back and patch things up with my mother. I was sure the whole mess was because of me and my sins: God was punishing my parents because I wasn't old enough to pay for my own evil ways, for my trips with Harry to Coney Island, where I'd eaten non-kosher Nathan's hotdogs with everything—mustard and sauerkraut and french fries with crinkles—and worse, even, accompanied my hotdog with a chocolate malted milk! "That's why I have scarlet fever now," I wanted to cry out after my father. But he'd already gone, telling my mother to get out of the way because he had important business at the shul to take care of.

My mother slumped into the faded armchair near the window and stared into the courtyard. I lay there, unable to say a word, letting the fever take over, hot, then cold, like sitting too long in the sun at Rockaway Beach.

I was sure the whole mess was because of me and my sins — I'd eaten trayf *Nathan's hotdogs.*

★

For a long time I found myself back inside the egg again; then, for a few brief moments, life appeared so clearly that I almost couldn't bear it—my mother outlined against the window, the holes in her hairnet bigger than the moon, the mahogany bureau with the tortoise shell handles, one missing from the third drawer—it almost hurt, feeling every object with my body, as if each *were* me.

Once, I woke up to see my uncle Harry standing only a few feet from the bed talking to a stranger, a nervous man in a corduroy suit. The man was holding a quarantine notice in one hand, and a hammer in the other. Then the man wasn't there anymore.

"Dad?" I heard myself call.

Harry asked me if I was feeling better, and I automatically nodded yes so that he wouldn't worry. He looked queer out of his army uniform, very thin, shorter without all his stripes and gold buttons.

"Who was that man?"

"Someone from the Board of Health."

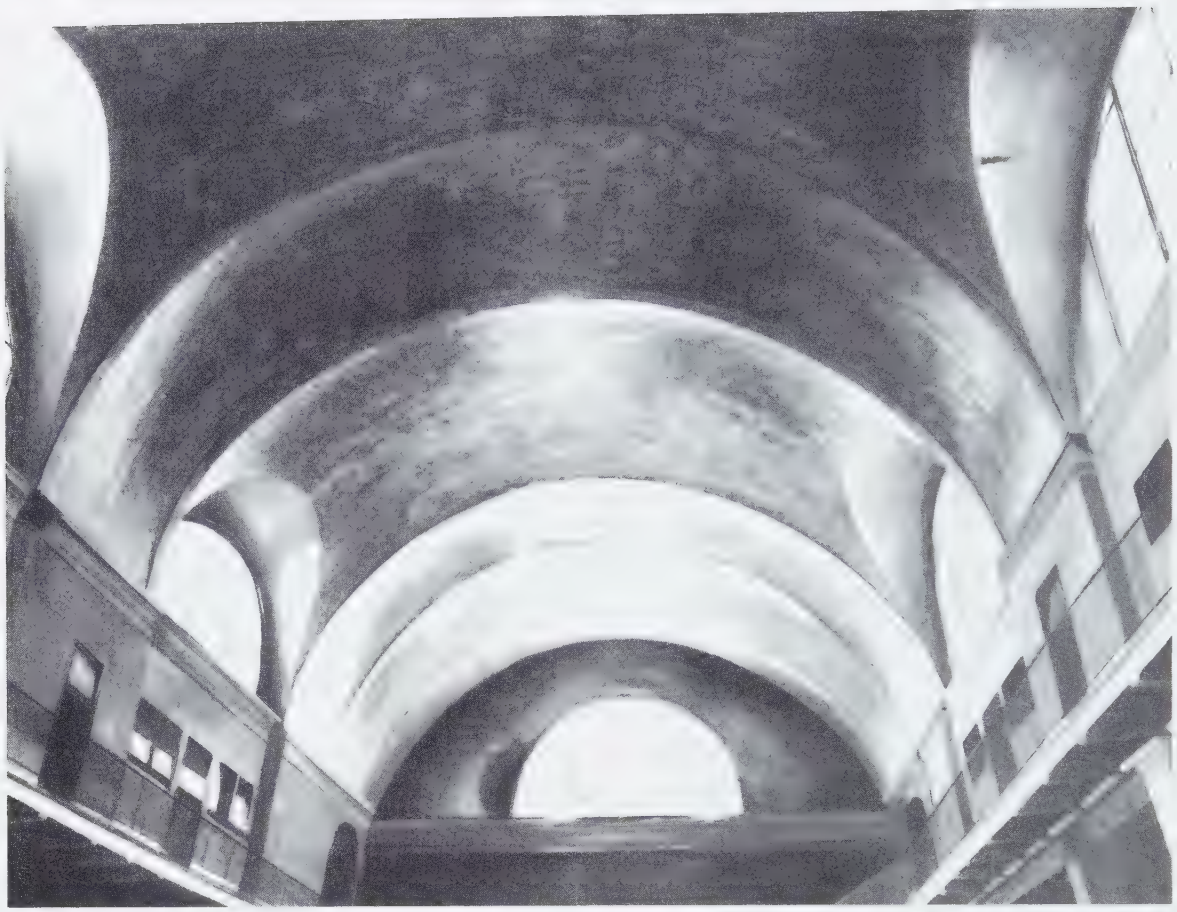
"Why?"

"He's just checking in. You're a very important patient. Even the mayor of New York sends visitors to see how you're doing," Harry said.

"You're joking."

"Honest, would I kid you?"

I looked around and saw that the room had changed: mine was the only bed in it; my baby brother's crib wasn't there anymore, and against



the wall where it had been, there was a white square. My parents' bed was piled high with books and suitcases and didn't look as if anyone had slept in it for a long time. The window shades were all drawn down tightly, and someone had hung heavy muslin sheets over the rest of the furniture. Only the top of the bureau still showed, and that was covered with bottles and cotton balls, a rubber enema bulb, and lots of glasses and spoons.

"It looks like a hospital here," I said to Harry. "Where's my mother?" He handed me a glass of water with a yellow straw in it and told me to drink. "That's to keep you from getting dehydrated."

"What's dehydrated?"

"Drying up."

I had a picture of myself shriveling like a mummy and wanted to laugh, but I couldn't stretch my face. Even my teeth hurt inside my mouth.

"Your mother's gone to the grocery."

"Do I have spots?" I noticed that the mirror had been covered over by a muslin sheet, too.

"Well, not exactly," Harry said. "But you wouldn't win the Miss Rheingold Contest just yet."

"Oh." I leaned back into the damp pillows and tried to push what felt like plastered hair from my forehead.

"No," Harry said, holding my hands away from my head. "Don't touch. . . you've got a cap on."

"A cap?"

"You know—like a bathing cap."

"What for?" I pulled my hands free and touched my fingers to my head. Just as Harry had said; there was a tight rubber cap where my hair used to be. Without the mirror it was easy to imagine myself looking like a chimpanzee in a bonnet I'd once seen performing in sign language at Radio City Music Hall.

"It's to make sure that you . . . that your hair stays in place."

How could I know that people lost their hair from scarlet fever? It was the farthest thing from my mind then. I didn't want to ask Harry any more about the cap, so I just let myself drop back into the deep, soundless sleep of escape I'd been enjoying. I wondered if my father was ever coming back home again.

It was night when I next awoke; I could tell from the absence of moving shadows against the shades, and from the dark blue-blackness of the room that made it different from the usual gloom of daylight filtered through muslin and egg white. I could hardly see. A new wave of dry heat surged up both inside and outside my body. I thought of pulling off the rubber cap, but my fingers wouldn't move and my hands and arms didn't want to leave my sides. I was paralyzed! I couldn't scream for help because my vocal chords were paralyzed too. I couldn't even form a tear and cry for myself. Only my ears seemed to be working properly, uncannily, in fact, for I could hear through the walls! A man and woman were talking.

"He's impossible," the man was saying. "How can you stand

living with him? Imagine him taking off like that without a word. . . and the kid so sick, too."

"Ah. . . " the woman sighed.

Then I noticed that someone was sitting in the old armchair near the window, and that it was my father. He had a finger to his lips. "Don't make a sound," he was saying. "Listen to them in there. You can hear them too, can't you?"

I nodded my head. I wanted to tell him that I was paralyzed, but no sounds would come out of my mouth.

My father was wearing a loose shirt open to the neck; it was so white that it gleamed like phosphorescent paint against the darkness. Medicine jugs sprouted around him like weeds. "This is your garden of punishment," he said.

I know. I wanted to say. *I ate non-kosher food.* But all I could do was think it.

"I'm praying for you to live," my father said. "You were a bad girl, going off with Harry and listening to him instead of me. . . your own father. You know what our sacred Commandments say, 'Honor thy father and mother!'. . . They tell you that at the yeshiva over and over again. Why don't you listen?"

The man's voice through the wall interrupted him then. "Why don't you call it quits?" That was followed by the sound of shuffling, a cotton housecoat brushing against a wall, and then a woman saying forlornly, "Aah. . . you've got to understand him. It's the pain of not being able to do anything for her. He suffers more than the rest of us because he really believes there's a God who is responsible for all this."

I looked toward the armchair, but nobody was sitting there anymore.

"Where do you think he's disappeared to?" the man asked.

"He's praying alone somewhere. . . day and night, I suppose. Praying for her to get well."

"Don't you see the man's crazy? He wouldn't even admit that she was sick!"

"As far as he's concerned, she's as good as dead without God."

There was my father again, sitting in the armchair, but this time in a holiday striped suit and wearing a gold tie clip with the Hebrew letters spelling *CHAI*—LIFE! He was carrying a closed umbrella. "It's raining out, a Flood," he said, pointing the umbrella toward the shaded windows.

Why did you stop praying for me, I thought.

"Because it's no good," my father answered, reading my mind as clearly as if I'd spoken out loud. "You've broken the Covenant, and God is angry, so He's sent another Flood."

You know He wouldn't do that, I thought-argued. *Rebbitzn Asher told us that he gave us the rainbow as a sign that He'd never send another Flood again.*

"You're getting too big for your britches," my father said. "A little bit of learning is a dangerous thing."

I closed my eyes and got ready for a fight.

"I'm going for a walk," the man beyond the walls was saying. "Can I get you anything?"

My mother outlined against the window, the holes in her hairnet bigger than the moon . . .

★

"Can I get you anything, *darling*?" my father mimicked. Then he opened the umbrella and, sprouting wings, flew up to the ceiling and hovered around the light fixture like a moth. Suddenly, I could see through the walls, as well as hear! There was Harry, kissing my mother. Then my Aunt Ida came rushing in with a cap pistol and started shooting. At that moment the gun went off and lightning filled the room, turning it sunny, fearsomely bright, like a fireworks show. . . the war exploding in my bedroom, where all the while my father was crazily swaying from the light fixture in the ceiling, crying, "The Flood, the Flood against a world full of sin!" Beyond the wall, Harry, wearing pointed civilian wingtipped shoes, was down on his knees begging my mother to run away with him, as my aunt shot him in the back over and over again with cap pistol streamers. I was sure I was done for.

★ ★ ★

Someone rolled up the window shade with a loud snap and opened the window. The sun, the real one, streamed freely into the room.

"I'm home," my father said. He approached the bed. This time he was dressed in his usual work clothes, and he was wearing a new hat I'd never seen before—a Panama hat with a gray band. I was hungry. I sat up painlessly. I touched my head, and where the cap was supposed to be there was hair—matted and a little damp—but it was my very own hair.

"Lil!" my father called. "Come here. . . she's okay." He was cleanshaven and smiling.

"Are you sure?" my mother asked, running into the room, a pot and scouring pad still in her hands.

"Of course I'm sure. Go on up to the Frayman's place and bring the baby back home. She's not contagious. . . she's fine," he said, and both my mother and I knew it was true, knew he wasn't crazy. I moved my toes up and down under the cover to prove I wasn't paralyzed, then tightened and relaxed the muscles in my calves—everything was working.

"God is good," said my father, pulling the sheet up from the mirror and rolling it into a ball. "This can go to the laundry."

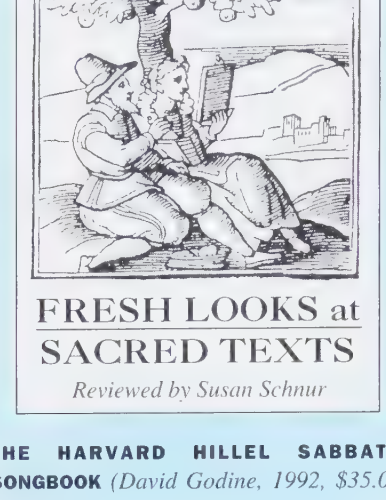
My mother just stood there, holding the dripping pot in front of her. Daylight covered them both and swept the wall and coverlets, glinting off the bottles and glasses on the bureau until stars filled the room.

"Is the war really over?" I asked. "What day is this?"

Reflected in the mirror, I saw my father and mother exchange the cautious half smile of strangers meeting for the first time.

Perle Besserman *is the author of several books on mysticism, including* Kabbalah: The Way of the Jewish Mystic, *and a novel,* Pilgrimage. *She received the Theodore Hoepfner fiction award and currently teaches writing at Rutgers University.*

Sherry Zvares Sanabria's *paintings can be seen at the David Adamson Gallery in Washington, D.C. Those shown here depict pre-renovation Ellis Island.*



FRESH LOOKS at SACRED TEXTS

Reviewed by Susan Schnur

THE HARVARD HILLEL SABBATH SONGBOOK *(David Godine, 1992, $35.00 hardcover, $19.95 paperback.)*

This elegant songbook, designed with headbands inspired by Italian-Jewish printers of the 16th century, and illustrated with Jewish woodcuts and engravings from the Middle Ages is, in a nutshell, very Harvard. It's also, if you know publishers, very Godine. The one hundred tunes are transcribed impeccably, with Hebrew titles set by hand in "Hillel" (a font created especially for this volume, based closely on a 10th century northern European manuscript). The songs come with studious and occasionally fascinating historical introductions, and meticulously crafted translations and transliterations. (A note on the transliteration bookishly explains, "the *sh'va na* is represented by an apostrophe, except in the middle of past tense verbs.")

Guitar chords, full piano notation and even four-part harmonic arrangements accompany many of the melodies. *Vihuda l'olam teshev*, is, for example, transcribed formally as a "canon in two parts," and some classic lyrics (like *Yah ribon* and *Tsur mishelo)* are presented with three different melodies. Besides traditional Ashkenazic tunes, there are modern Hebrew folk numbers, Yemenite and other Sephardic songs, and even occasional *nigunim* from songwriters like Shlomo Carlibach, Baruch Chait, M. Warshawsky and the Yiddish theater. There is also an extensive section of blessings for *Shabbat*. The volume is, in a word, gorgeous—it is also terribly conservative, chokingly "tasteful." God is "He," there are no feminist revisions at all, no West Coast "renewal Judaism" melodies, and no Ladino. There are also a fair number of yawny chestnuts like "*Hevenu sholom alechem*."

What this volume doesn't convey at all is the passionate spirit of Sabbath chanting—that is, the feeling of glee, abandon, tribal (and even cosmic) rhythm-making, energy and high mischief with which *z'miros* [Sabbath hymns] have been sung probably since the time of the 16th century mystics of Safed. Sabbath singing is, after all, a supremely spiritual practice—the point being that sacred song helps move us beyond our personal preoccupations and open us to deeper levels of connection and contentment; it alters our consciousness, induces our ordinary minds to dissolve, wakens our spirituality, and profoundly brings us to rest in that warm, safe space called *shabbos*.

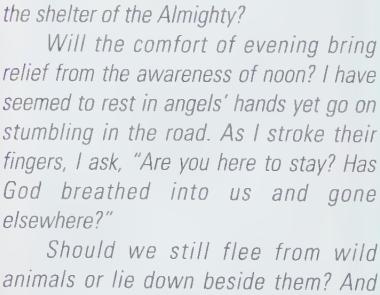
To be fair, the *Sabbath Songbook* does convey some of the holiness and spiritual renewal that characterize the Sabbath—but wow is it dowdy and solemn, with none of the ecstasy, relaxation and fun that really distinguish great nights at Hillel. Still, would I buy this highly imperfect volume as a gift? Absolutely.

RENEWED EACH DAY: DAILY TWELVE STEP RECOVERY MEDITATIONS BASED ON THE BIBLE by Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky and Aaron Z., *Volume 1 [Genesis and Exodus] and Volume 2 [Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy]. (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992, $12.95 each.)*

Non-Jewish twelve step books abound for people who are in recovery from addiction (to drugs, alcohol, sex, food, etc.). The formula—a calendar year of spiritually oriented meditations meant to be read one page per day—is a tried-and-true one, the therapeutic goal being for the recovering addict to address life's challenges in very small doses, "one day at a time."

Many Jews, however, find this particular publishing schema, as well as the twelve-step programs that spawn it, often problematically Christian in orientation. Most AA, NA and OA groups not only meet in churches (a fact that some Jewish participants wish were otherwise, and that synagogues could easily redress through reciprocal hospitality), but the religious orientation of the programs themselves—

SIDDUR BIRKAT SHALOM is an extraordinary new prayerbook, honed to perfection over seven years by members of the Havurat Shalom Siddur Project (113 College Avenue, Somerville, MA 02144). It does everything right. A simple, theoretical preface explains how the group's principles are reflected in its liturgical changes and in the members' theology. English translations (as well as meditations and "adaptations") use language that welcomes the pray-er to actually feel spiritual. Hebrew liturgical changes are groundbreaking. The intelligent diplomacy of Project members is apparent in their compromises, too—for example, rather than mixing both male and female God-language into the same prayers, some prayers have only the original Hebrew God-language; others have newly-minted female God-language. Overall, the prayerbook conveys a great feeling of care, of quiet, and of integrity.



This is a meditation on "Psalm 91:"

I look for the eagle's wings and find myself in the shadow of a butterfly. Is this the shelter of the Almighty?

Will the comfort of evening bring relief from the awareness of noon? I have seemed to rest in angels' hands yet go on stumbling in the road. As I stroke their fingers, I ask, "Are you here to stay? Has God breathed into us and gone elsewhere?"

Should we still flee from wild animals or lie down beside them? And then, will we all be safe? The pestilence seems to be our own.

Surely God will provide a new shelter for us as our old words give way. With a gentle hand She will guide Israel in endless searches through the golden streams of Her holiness. The light still comes from every living source.

All illustrations from *The Harvard Hillel Sabbath Songbook*

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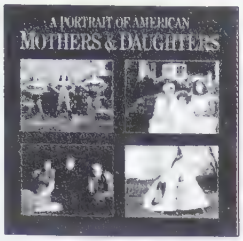

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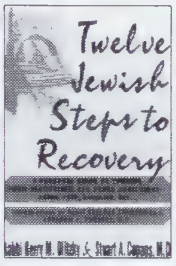

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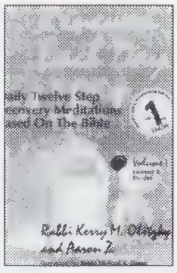

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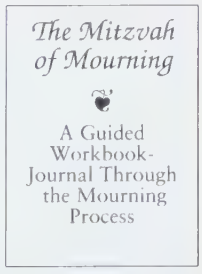

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Bringing to mind Barbara Myerhoff's classic book *Number Our Days*, Susan Starr Sered's **WOMEN AS RITUAL EXPERTS: THE RELIGIOUS LIVES OF ELDERLY JEWISH WOMEN IN JERUSALEM** (Oxford U. Press, 1992) is a warm, feminist ethnographic study of a group of largely illiterate and widowed Kurdish and Yemenite women.

The following excerpt describes, believe it or not, a typical day:

A bent old woman, wearing two colorful kerchiefs, indiscriminately kisses books in the back of the House of Study, and then kisses the shelf on which the books rest. Her friend, making an eloquent gesture with her arm, blesses all of the young men who are engaged in studying sacred texts. These same women will return home, spend hours preparing traditional Jewish foods, and then in the evening go to synagogue to attend a prayer service of which they understand no more than a few words. At several times during the service they will hold their hands palms upward, kiss their fingers, and beseech God to grant their children, grandchildren, and all of the Israeli Defense Forces, health and happiness. Following the service, they will distribute perfume to the other women in the ladies' gallery of the synagogue, and all will anoint themselves with the perfume, proudly declaring the Hebrew blessing said for sweet smells. Despite their own poverty, on their way home from synagogue they will be careful to give small sums of money to every beggar that they pass.

CONGREGATION BET HAVERIM, the lesbian and gay synagogue of Atlanta, has its own prayerbook. Here are two beautiful excerpts:

Before the Kaddish

O God, remember today our gay sisters and brothers who were martyred in years past, those who were burned at the stake in the Middle Ages, as well as those who perished in the Holocaust. Remember also those who, driven to despair at living in a world that hated them because of their love for one another, took their own lives. And remember those who have wasted their lives by suppressing their true natures and refraining from sharing their love with one another. O God, accept the holy sacrifice of these martyrs, and call an end to the hate and oppression that we have known for so long.

Prayer for the End of Hiding

As gay and lesbian Jews, we are aware of the loss of integrity we suffer due to pressures of larger society. We often feel forced into a dishonest presentation of ourselves, to ourselves and others. The gay men and lesbians who feel they must pretend to be something that they are not, the Jews who feel they must be alienated from their tradition and community to win larger acceptance, both are victims of a theft of identity and integrity committed by the sexual or religious majority.

Creator of the universe, we ask that our hiding draw to an end, that we no longer feel we have to pretend, to promise falsely, to renounce ourselves, and that our fullest creative expression as Jews and as gay people be among the blessings you bestow upon us.

God is mentioned explicitly in six of the twelve steps—often reflexively prompts, to quote Toqueville, a "tyranny of the majority." Recovery literature, even when sophisticated, can take Jews aback with its assumptions of Christianity.

This book is intended, then, as a corrective. Adamantly and really very beautifully Jewish, it is organized around each week's liturgical Torah portion, from Genesis 1 through the end of Deuteronomy. Weekly entries are largely schematic; for example, *Parshat Vayeshev* [Genesis 37:1-40:23], subtitled "Handling Resentments," is first presented through a very brief plot summary, then followed by seven days' worth of daily meditations. "Sunday" ("Let's kill Joseph and throw him into a pit") includes the advice, "That's one way of handling resentments, but not the right way. It's such negative energy. Why not harness it and make it do good instead?"

Such pollyannish apothegms can quickly grow tedious to someone not in recovery, but Mondays' entries (like Thursdays'), written by the second author, Aaron Z., are longer, more intensely Jewish *midrashim* which introduce the reader to wise counsel from such sources as the Talmud, the Zohar,and the Malbim. Aaron Z. is a self-described Orthodox thirtysomething businessman/father of three, longtime Mets, Bob Dylan and Grateful Dead fan, and active member of his synagogue men's club. But "the main thing you need to know about me," he explains baldly, "is that I'm a Jewish addict." He charts his drug journey from pot and LSD through Quaaludes, Valium and, finally, cocaine, followed by recovery. He's certainly a credible biblical wilderness guide.

There is, of course, a meta-message in this book: that an isolated, struggling addict might not only borrow from Judaism a wellspring of daily prudence, but maybe also find, in the religion itself, a shelter from the storm.

It's also almost comic, because it's so rare, to see the unexpurgated Torah offered up without hermeneutical apologetics, head-on, as the document that, in a real sense, it is: an astonishing chronicle of human shortcomings and fallibility—impulsivity, sibling rivalry, greed, pain, ostracism, envy, slavery, misogyny, humiliation, moral corruption, the Israelites' idolatry and ceaseless bickering in the desert—if it ain't one thing it's another. As an interpretive instrument of recovery, this naked Bible is ideal, providing the wounded reader, as the foreword puts it, with not "simply reading, but a meditative process of looking at ourselves in the mirror . . . enabling us to see ourselves from the perspective of our tradition and its search for God." The message, in other words, is that despite our messy day-to-day journeys, "slips and all, it all still leads to blessing."

Finally, this book offers, as a completely unexpected surprise, a different and important kind of recovery: that of the biblical text itself. In the same way that post-modernist translators like Marcia Falk, Stephen Mitchell or Jonathan Star are helping us to "hear" a spiritual canon again, instead of just the death rattle of responsive readings, *Renewed Each Day* models a way for us to make the Torah authentically emerge from ourselves again. When an alcoholic prays (from the book of Lamentations), "Take us back, O God, to Yourself, and let us come back. Renew our days as of old," it is not just the Bible helping the addict to recover. It is the addict (in the tradition of literary spiritual translation) helping the Bible to recover, too.

Barry W. Holtz has done readers a great service with **THE SCHOCKEN GUIDE TO JEWISH BOOKS: WHERE TO START READING ABOUT JEWISH HISTORY, LITERATURE, CULTURE AND RELIGION** *(Schocken, 1992, $25.00).* Chapter headings include "The Jewish Middle Ages," "Jewish Mysticism," "Jewish Philosophy," "Israel," "Hebrew Literature," and "The Jewish Novelist in America." The chapter "Jewish Women's Studies" by Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell comprehensively surveys the literature — including magazines, anthologies, how-to manuals, and essays — and conveys the role of women in traditional Jewish religious life and law, spirituality, feminist biblical scholarship, feminist liturgy, literature, and sexuality. Holtz's guide is an excellent, up-to-date overview.

— Sally Berkovic

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING: WOMEN AND THE SYNAGOGUE Edited by Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut *(Jewish Publication Society, 1992, $19.95)*

In sixteen articulate essays, Grossman, a Conservative rabbi, and Haut, an Orthodox activist, explore the role of women in the synagogue through three frames: the historical, the *halakhic* [pertaining to Jewish law], and the contemporary. Each essay in this scholarly yet reader-friendly anthology is complemented by extensive bibliographical notes.

The historical essays trace women's participation in synagogue life from the time of the Jerusalem Temple through medieval Cairo and Europe of the Middle Ages, highlighting the importance of *firzogerin* (women prayer leaders) and women's original compositions of Yiddish *tkhines* (personal supplications).

The second group of essays examines *halakha* in relation to the participation of women in the synagogue, challenging "conventional wisdoms" such as the belief that women are not obligated to pray, or that menstruating women cannot enter a synagogue or touch a Torah scroll. Haut explains the origins of Orthodox women's prayer groups, their format, and the sense of commuity fostered as women learn cantorial skills and girls have the opportunity to receive the honor of an *aliyah* to the Torah.

In the final section there are contemporary personal vignettes and oral histories: elderly Yemenite women in Jerusalem, Persian women in New York, and modern American feminists.

— S.B.

"I was the Nile rising up and fertilizing the ground," writes Lois Silverstein in **BLOODLETTING: A MIND AT MIDLIFE** (Red Shoes Press, 2314 Derby Street, Berkeley, CA 94705), an onrushing, compelling, intimate and chilling journal of a woman's profundity, longing and fury unleashed when she hits age 50. Here is an excerpt:

Me
I take my mother to the hospital and she is angry
because
the hospital's where
cousin Yitzy died age 32 after changing a tire in the road
where Papa died age 46 after a slight cold
where Stanley died age 10 after acting somewhat odd
where Brian died age 29 from nothing they could see
and where
she smiles
at the Admitting Nurse
Cardiac Nurse
Intern
and the
Aide
and where
she tells me
I am mean and stupid and have no heart
I am mean and stupid and have no heart

...and the guy at the desk asks questions like
when is your birthday and what is your real address

78 not 72
101 not 84
Mother you cannot lie at a time like this
Mother how can you lie at a time like this

Me
I come at last to take her hand
stand beside the gauge strapped to her up
going up going down going east going west
and the first thing she says is

Why did you have to tell them my real age
Even the driver said What kind of a daughter is that

A Jew can come to symbolize (to a non-Jew) not just the idea of exile, but of self-exile, too. Here, in **REBELLION: ESSAYS 1980-1991** (Firebrand Books, 1991), Minnie Bruce Pratt, a Christian-raised Southerner, writes about her father and anti-Semitism:

I think of how my father's friends down at the drugstore used to tease him about his supposedly Jewish features, his big nose, his long fleshy ears; they'd joke and call him Mr. Ginsberg. I think of how when he was in his last illness, barely coherent, he would rouse enough to joke in a sweetly self-deprecating way that, of course, he knew who he was: he'd smile and say, "Mr. Ginsberg." What it meant to him, I don't know; but to me this memory brings enormous grief, the tragedy of my father estranged from himself all his life, a conflict that he attempted to resolve through whisky, through theories of Blacks and Jews who were "trying to take over," and, finally, through some small knowledge that he held of a secret other self, a self he could not name as his own, but had to name as "Jew," the one forever apart.

— Susan Schnur

Correction: The correct phone number for the Chelm Historical Society [Summer '92 reviews] is 718-488-4718.

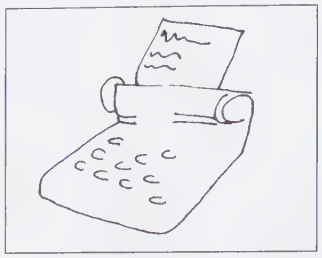
(continued from page 4)

er at the AJPA's annual meeting in Miami in June 1992.

Over 100 participants were promised that they'd hear from more prominent American Jewish leaders than had ever before briefed an AJPA meeting, but only one woman spoke about Jewish issues—a press officer from the Israeli Embassy.

"In the context of the women's movement, this meeting represents bad news and good news," said Leni Reiss, managing editor of the *Greater Phoenix Jewish News*. "The bad news is that there aren't that many high-profile Jewish women on a national level like Shoshana Cardin who could address this meeting. But the good news is that within the Jewish press there are lots of women in powerful positions."

Half the number of journalists at the meeting were women, and they are very visible in the AJPA directory of more than 100 newspapers, magazines, and news agencies. Fifty-four women are editors, 29 are business or advertising managers, and 18 are publishers, although five of these are co-publishers with their husbands. But, ironically, it was proposed that one reason for the high number of



Sheila Shapira-Cortez

women on editorial boards is the low salary in the Jewish press. "No one goes into Jewish journalism for the money," says Mark Joffe, editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency — the assumption being that women can afford to work for lower salaries than men can.

But does women's numerical strength translate into editorial power? Despite the changing nature of the American Jewish family and newspaper readership, which editors and publishers claim to recognize, mainstream Jewish media pay only token attention to stories of interest to Jewish women, here or in Israel.

Despite explicitly condemning sexism in the Jewish media and in communal life—Malcolm Hoenlein, for example, executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said that Jewish communal organizations had excluded women and youth from policy-making roles in the past—sexist attitudes have not vanished at the AJPA meetings. One example: at a labor relations session which covered both sexual harassment and disabilities discrimination, Conrad Berke, general manager of New York's *Jewish Week*, said he tried to prevent sexual harassment by telling his female advertising staff not to shake hands with clients. In contrast, Flo Eckstein, publisher of the *Greater Phoenix Jewish News*, said she would have no trouble saying "no" to any harassing client, even at the risk of losing ad revenue. "You can't afford not to say 'no'," she said.

Another example of pre-feminist thinking came in a session on libel law. A male editor from the Midwest described what happened when he ran a three-column-wide photo of two men and one woman who were being honored. "The woman was very fat and called up outraged that we had run such an unflattering picture. No doubt, she thought it was a gross misrepresentation of her," he joked, "but we have to wonder what the fuss was about. After all, didn't her friends know she was fat before the photo appeared?"

Maybe it is attitudes like this which help explain why Slim-Fast (kosher) products were given as freebies to the journalists. It's not bodies that need to get in shape here, but attitudes instead.

—Karen Davis

New from The Feminist Press

THE SEASONS: Death and Transfiguration
A Memoir by Jo Sinclair

As a novelist concerned with issues of gender, social class, and ethnicity, Jo Sinclair has won coveted literary prizes and a devoted following. Now, in this extraordinary memoir, she relates a tale as fascinating, and as moving, as any work of fiction. At the center of Sinclair's story is her relationship with Helen Buchman, a middle-class wife and mother with a passion for gardening. The two women couldn't have been more different: Buchman, despite suffering from diabetes, was self-assured, cultured, stable. Sinclair, on the other hand, was a product of the Jewish ghetto, carrying a host of emotional and spiritual scars. Nevertheless, when Buchman invited the young woman into her home in the 1940s, the two developed an intense relationship. Buchman became both best friend and mentor, encouraging Sinclair's writing and passing along a sense of the spiritual nature of gardening. The book deals not only with these early formative years but also with Sinclair's struggle to accept her friend's death in 1963, her triumph over alcoholism, and her ultimate transfiguration as an accomplished author.

***Jo Sinclair** is the author of* Wasteland, *winner of the 1946 Harper Prize;* Sing at My Wake; The Changelings, *nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and named Best Book of Fiction by an Ohioan in 1956, as well as honored by the Jewish Book Council; and* Anna Teller, *which received both an Ohioan prize and the 1961 Cleveland Arts Prize in Literature.*

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Foreword by Anne Halley

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FICTION

Reviewed by Molly Abramowitz

CLOSING THE SEA

by Yehudit Katzir, translated from the Hebrew by Barbara Harshav. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992, $18.95.

Four long stories probe the psyche—their naked reality vying with the phantasmagoric—in this brilliant collection by 29-year-old Yehudit Katzir, a new and disturbing voice from Israel. *Closing the Sea* was originally published in Israel in 1990 when the author was 26, and was that year's top-selling book. It sold over 45,000 copies (equivalent to about 2 million in America)—more than *Mr. Mani* by A. B. Yehoshua, the best-selling Israeli novelist.

In "Schlafstunde," written in first-person stream of consciousness, two cousins discover their sexuality, play endless games, and improvise their wedding night. In "Fellini's Shoes," Millie, a dissatisfied young waitress yearning for a release from her boring life, meets Joshua Spielman, an aging director, who takes her on a Fellini-like surrealistic adventure. He takes her away in his Mercedes, and promises to make her a great actress. Millie's imagination predicts things will not end well: "I saw the bald skull under the silver toupee of the Hollywood director, and inside his skull Snow White lay naked and spread-eagled, tied to a bed and with her mouth taped."

In the title piece, "Closing the Sea," Ilana, an unfulfilled schoolteacher, sneaks a day off and takes the bus from Haifa to Tel Aviv to visit her old friend Tami who has become an actress and who Ilana thinks lives a glamorous life. Ilana's day is spent unhappily—she gets talked into buying an awful dress and thinks everyone is looking at her when she wears it out of the store: "Tears fill Ilana's eyes, as on the school playground during the third or fourth grade, when they ran around the field and one nasty girl behind her pulled her blue baggy sweat pants with the elastic waist and everyone saw her underpants." Ilana's friend Tami is not leading a glitzy life at all, but a wrung-out and workaday one. Katzir's stories are filled with themes of lost childhood and the painful, usually difficult transition to adulthood.

TWILIGHT AND OTHER STORIES

by Shulamith Hareven, translated from the Hebrew by Miriam Arad, Hillel Halkin, J.M. Lask, and David Weber. Mercury House, 1992, $10.95.

The Israeli writer Shulamith Hareven, author of thirteen books in Hebrew (*Twilight and Other Stories* is her fourth book in English; after *City of Many Days, The Miracle Hater,* and *Prophet*), once again uses her creative skill to craft these troubling, almost surreal stories. In the title story a woman dreams that she is visiting a city of sorrow and darkness which becomes a metaphor for the repressed feelings of guilt of a Holocaust survivor. She awakens in her home in Jerusalem drenched in sunlight, the sunless city gone, but not the memories.

In "Loneliness," a wealthy Jerusalem matron has little to occupy her days while her architect husband is on a business trip to Malta. Her attempts to ingratiate herself to her sister-in-law are unsuccessful, as are her efforts to befriend a pathetic young girl. Lonely women are featured in other stories, also set against the backdrop of the quiet and the magic of the city of Jerusalem. The psychological insight makes these stories both engrossing and haunting, and the prose is full of beautiful surprises, as when one of Hareven's characters says, "There are people who make you want to take a broom and sweep half of their words out the door."

THE JOURNEY

by Ida Fink, translated from the Polish by Francine Prose and Johanna Weschler. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1992, $20.

Like Ida Fink's first collection of stories, *A Scrap of Time*, this novel tells a Holocaust survivor's tale of Poland in 1942. The concentration camps are barely mentioned, and the tone is delicate, yet a quiet scream is heard on every page of this riveting book. Fink, herself a survivor, now living in Israel and working at Yad Vashem, portrays the lives of ordinary people as they are forced to confront the unimaginable. Two Jewish sisters from a cultured background flee the ghetto disguised as Polish peasants. The secure family life they once knew is over, never to return. They put their lives at risk as they journey into enemy territory to look for work as hired hands in the factories, farms, and villages of wartime Germany.

At a transit camp they are challenged to sing Christmas carols to show they are really Polish peasant girls. A Polish factory worker comments, "these two don't look Jewish," and another responds with, "there are those who don't." Unfortunately, the Gestapo is well aware that Jews are obtaining false papers, forcing the girls to flee one work camp after another and assume new identities.

The author offers an extraordinary insight into the lives of those in hiding—for example, how survivors distinguish friends from enemies: a farmhand to be trusted is one who doesn't contradict the narrator's claim to be an experienced milkmaid, even after he sees the raw blisters on her hands.

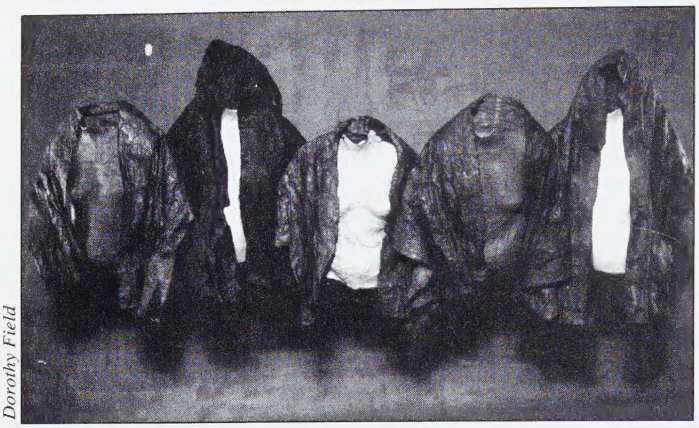
The sisters, cunning, sharp, able to adapt to any unforeseen circumstance at a moment's notice, maintain their real identities through daydreams and dreams—which help them to survive in a world gone mad. Through all, the beauty of the landscape is portrayed and human loyalty is championed in this beautifully written book.

Molly Abramowitz, a government writer, lives in the Washington, DC area. She reviews books of Jewish interest and is the author of a book on Elie Wiesel.

Rachel Winifred Upjohn Light
(1880-1929)

ARE YOU OVER 54?

The Thanks Be To Grandmother Winifred Foundation funds women over 54 to enable them to create, and manifest into reality, ideas and concepts that will improve the lives of women. The purpose of limiting the beneficiaries to individuals over 54 is to encourage a segment of the population (older women)–generally ignored, forgotten, and considered invisible–to have courage and confidence in their ability to gift the common weal with their knowledge and wisdom. **For information, write TBGWF/LIL, P. O. Box 1449, Wainscott, N.Y. 11975.**



Dorothy Field

Sculpture of handmade paper, entitled WOMEN IN BLACK: MOURNING THE SPLIT, by Dorothy Field, who writes, "I live far from any of the centers where Women in Black groups stand vigil. This is my statement of solidarity with Women in Black."

BODY POLITIC

Women in Black, the informal movement of women who stand vigil throughout Israel every Friday from 1-2 pm to protest the Occupation and attendant violence, publishes a newsletter, by the same name, available in Hebrew or English, for $20.00. Contributions welcome for general support and correspondence. *Women in Black, P.O. B. 61128, Jerusalem 91060, Israel.*

Politics: A Game for Young Women is a board game developed to teach politics and women's history and to encourage women to become politicians; for resale through feminist organizations or institutions as a fundraiser. Sample game $15.00 (Resale for $25.00). Information from *Maevernon Varnum or Jodi Talbot, Vartal Enterprises, Box 506, Ambler, PA 19002.*

Sexual Harassment: Research and Resources, A Report-in-Progress focuses on current legal and scholarly definitions of sexual harassment, the dimensions and roots of the problem, beliefs about harassers, behaviors of the harassed, anti-harassment goals, policies, and procedures. $16.00; bulk discounts. *National Council for Research on Women, Sara Delano Roosevelt House, 47-49 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10021, (212) 570-5001.*

Rape and Alcohol is a brochure presenting statistics on the connection between rape on campus and alcohol consumption. Free sample; proceeds from bulk sales will support women' s programs at Mankato State University. *The Women's Center, MSU Box 107, Mankato State University. P.O. Box 8400, Mankato, MN 56002-8400.*

On Being a Lesbian in Israel: send poems, prose and stories for a new anthology to *Ayelet Hamidbar Publications, 1678 Shattuck Avenue #133, Berkeley, CA 94709.*

The Eco-Kosher Project encourages institutions and individuals to make purchases and investments and use resources in accord with a Jewishly rooted and defined ethic of social responsibility, in particular for the environment. The program, inspired by Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, and Orthodox rabbis, is intended both for those who follow traditional *kashrut* and those who don't. For information, a speaker, or to make a contribution, contact: *The Eco-Kosher Project, Institute for Jewish Renewal, 7318 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19119.*

Gesher is a small organization reaching out to thousands of Israel's young people with a message of tolerance. It has developed new programs specifically for recent Russian immigrants. Tax deductible contributions may be sent to *Gesher Foundation, 421 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10001.*

National Battered Women's Law Project is an information clearinghouse for advocates, attorneys, and policy makers on the legal issues battered women face. *National Center on Women and Family Law, 799 Broadway #402, New York, NY 10003, (212) 674-8200.*

RSVP is a jewelry line, drawing on mythologies of ancient

SEPHARAD: WOMEN IN SONG AND DANCE

Yael Bloom

Sharona Paller Rubinstein and Steve Weintraub

Songs of the Jews of Calcutta, compiled and edited by Rahel Musleah transcribes more than 50 songs *(pizmonim)* for Shabbat, holidays and special occasions and gives a historical musical overview of the Calcutta Jewish community. Includes vocal line, texts, transliterations, and annotation. Hardbound with accompanying cassette, $29.95 plus $4.00 shipping, from *Tara Publications, 29 Derby Avenue, Cedarhurst, NY 11516.*

Breezes from Andalusia: Dance, Spain, and the Jews, is a combined program of dance performance and scholarship presented by JoAnne Tucker, director and choreographer of the Avodah Dance Ensemble, and Raymond Scheindlin, author of *Wine, Women & Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life* (Jewish Publication Society, 1992). Available especially for commemorations of the 500th anniversary of the expulsion from Spain. *Avodah, c/o JoAnne Tucker, 243 Fifth Street, #9, Jersey City, NJ 07302 (201) 659-7072.*

Ofra Does Her Laundry With My Tears is a dance based on the fanciful tale of a slave girl who wins the heart of a nobleman; based on *Wine, Women & Death* (see above), this work, choreographed by Sharona Paller Rubinstein, is performed by the Parparim Ensemble. *To arrange for a performance contact: Israeli Dance Institute, JCRC-12th Floor, 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212) 983-4806 x144.*

goddesses, designed to stimulate an awareness of the Earth and our relationship with it. Profits are donated to environmental and world relief organizations. *Joan Koplewitz Inc., Fine Art Jewelry, P.O.B. 4392, Burlington, VT 05406, (800) 639-6036.*

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Questions Jewish Parents Ask About Intermarriage by Rabbis Aryeh Meir and Mark Winer, is a guide that promotes inmarriage or conversion of the non-Jewish partner but also stresses outreach to intermarrieds for whom conversion is not currently possible. Free with SASE from *Janice Hyman, American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022.*

Women, Science and your Daughter is one of a series of four pamphlets developed with a grant from the Women's Education Equity Act Program; it offers suggestions for parents and educators to enhance the math and science achievement of girls. Sample of 4 pamphlets $2.50; bulk orders also available from *WEEA Publishing Center; Education Development Center, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02160, (617) 969-7100.*

The National Havurah Committee Teachers' Bureau is a clearinghouse designed to match havurot and synagogue adult education programs with havurah-style teachers who are dedicated to sharing their knowledge, skills, and passion for learning with others who may never have had a positive Jewish learning experience. *Rivkah Walton, NHC Teacher's Bureau, P.O. Box 262, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004-6621, (215) 843-1470.*

News from Jerusalem makes Israeli Radio (Kol Israel) newscasts in English and Hebrew available throughout the USA via telephone, at a cost of $1.50 per minute. (Callers must be 18 or over.) News segments run 3-5 minutes and are edited to weed out items unrelated to Israel and the Jewish people. The service is provided by a private company, *Dateline Jerusalem Inc. of Palo Alto. 1-900-7373-NEWS.*

For the Record *(Al Hanekuda)* is a free monthly digest of translated news from Israel's major news-papers. *For The Record, 2025 Pennsylvania Avenue NW #715, Washington DC 20006, (202) 833-8267.*

INCLUDE AND BE INCLUDED

Shekhinah: Feminine Essence of God is a one hour work-in-progress video documentary about women rabbis. Funds to complement foundation support are sought to complete the project; a 10-minute clip is already available. Contact filmmaker: *Leslie Krongold, 142 Tiffany Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 824-4401.*

The Hebrew Seminary for the Deaf, is the first "deaf-friendly" facility for advanced Jewish studies. For further information regarding the seminary, its goals and format, or its fund-raising needs, contact *Congregation Bene Shalom, Hebrew Association of the Deaf, 4435 W. Oakton, Skokie, IL 60035, (708) 677-3330.*

The Great National Jewish Read-In is a contest in which friends, relatives and neighbors serves as "sponsors," pledging a contribution for each book a child reads during National Jewish Book Month. Money raised will provide a wide range of services to enable visually impaired persons to participate fully in Jewish religious, cultural, and communal activities in the USA, Israel, and 40 other countries. *Israel A. Taub, Jewish Braille, Institute of America, 110 East 30th Street, New York, NY 10016.*

Gates of Prayer for Shabbat is the Reform movement's first gender-sensitive prayerbook, responding to feminist concerns by eliminating gender references to God and acknowledging the importance of both women and men in Jewish tradition, history, and worship. Softcover, 96 pages, $7.50 from *CCAR Press, 192 Lexington Avenue, NY, NY 10016, (212) 684-4990.*

REMEMBER

©Sharon Gurman Socol

March of the Living 1992, Auschwitz.

The Other Side of Faith focuses on the moral courage of a 16-year-old Polish Catholic girl who, with the help of her 6-year-old sister, saves the lives of thirteen Jews during the Holocaust. The story is told by the heroine and her husband, one of the men whose life she saved. The 27-minute VHS tape includes a discussion guide, $40.00. *Rita Catama, Documentaries International Ltd., 1800 K Street #1120, Washington DC 20006, (202) 429-9320.*

The Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers assists some 1,000 people in fifteen countries who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Monthly grants to the rescuers — many of whom are elderly and poor — pay for food, rent, utilities, and medical expenses. Groups and individuals are sought for an "honor-a-rescuer" program, receiving the name and address of a rescuer they help to support. Information from *Diana Stein, JFCR, Anti Defamation League, 823 UN Plaza, NY, NY 10017, (212) 490-2525 x429.*

The Hidden Child is a newsletter published as an outgrowth of last year's conference of children who survived the Holocaust in hiding. Support groups now meet throughout the U.S. and a second world gathering is being planned for the summer of 1993 in Israel. Speakers share their childhood experiences with students via newspaper, television, and radio interviews through a speaker's bureau which seeks more participants. *Hidden Child Foundation, ADL, 823 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, (212) 490-2525.*

The 4th March of the Living will bring together several thousand Jewish youths from all over the world to Poland to visit the sites of struggle and extermination of the Holocaust and then to Israel to witness the rebirth of the Jewish homeland. For information on the next March , scheduled for April 1994, contact *March of the Living, c/o Central Agency for Jewish Education, 4200 Biscayne Boulevard , Miami FL 33137, (305) 576-4030.*

Rosellen Brown, Aviva Cantor, Marcia Falk, and Melanie Kaye-Kantrowitz are speakers at the 2nd Texas Jewish Feminist Conference Oct. 23-25, *American Jewish Committee, 336 Richmond Ave. #303, Houston, TX 77098, (713) 524-1133.*

— compiled by Naomi Danis

Kathy Sillman

A la recherche du taiglach perdu

I wanted my mother. I went into the kitchen, and, though I hate to cook, I made a kugel. Are you in there Mom? I said. To myself, so to speak. No answer. Maybe because it was a modern day type kugel with modern day type vegetables, baby corn ears and designer zucchini.

I made a cholent: beans and potatoes. Garlic. It cooked for hours. The smell went to all ends of the apartment. I wasn't surprised my mother wasn't in there because I never knew her to make cholent. But surely the garlic . . . garlic had been her ally. How she would burn it! Like incense. Invoking perhaps her mother who surely, in her time, made cholent.

Then I had a hankering for taiglach. Maybe she would be in one of those honeyed jawbreaking balls of cooked flour. Or in a nut or even one of those candied cubes of dried fruit. But when I went to buy one of those mounds the bakery saleswoman said, Ten dollars. For a pile of cooked balls of flour sitting in a few nuts and fruit bits and a puddle of honey! I couldn't make myself shell out the money.

I wandered around with this craving.

Mom I said to myself.

I went to the mirror. There she was, or at least her cheekbones. And there were some of the same age freckles she used to get.

Mom? I said.

There was no answer.

So I went out, bought some taiglach and ate them all.

BY BARBARA FLECK—PALADINO

Barbara Fleck-Paladino has taught early childhood classes and is the mother of three sons, aged thirty five, thirty four, and sixteen.